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New Park, Old Labels: Appropriation of the Male *Tongzhi* Identity as a Tool of Taiwanese Nationalism During and After Martial Law

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The only Asian country to have legalized same-sex marriage today, Taiwan's "*tongzhi* awakening" flourished in academic spaces following the lifting of martial law in 1987. The term *tongzhi* (同志, comrade, or LGBTQ+ people) was first used in Hong Kong but was quickly appropriated by Taiwanese academics to rebrand the gay community to align with socially accepted standards to gain mainstream approval.² Though the Nationalist regime heavily policed homosexuality for defying the government-defined social norms during the period of martial laws, the quasi-democracy of the late 1980s opened a dialogue for the discussion of the rights of sexual minorities, despite frequent ostracization of these communities. As free speech slowly proliferated during the lifting of martial law, the Taiwanese nationalist identity and *tongzhi* identity developed alongside each other.³ Taiwanese nationalism, a fairly recent concept heavily influenced by the geopolitical context of the island and its multicultural peoples, sought to carve out a separate identity away from mainland China, colonial Japan, and Taiwan's bloody history of violent political suppression.⁴ At the same time, Euro-American queer theory emboldened Taiwanese academics to carve a space for gay rights within the island's larger conquest for democracy and international recognition. To do so, the *tongzhi* movement, led by elites and academics, sought to incorporate the Taiwanese gay identity into the mainstream cultural consciousness. Previous historical literature and analyses extensively studied both the development of Taiwanese nationalism as well as the progressive character of gay rights in Taiwan compared to other Asian countries. However, despite a general acknowledgment of Taiwan's political and social progressiveness, there is a noticeable gap in understanding how political and cultural factors affected the concurrent developments of a unique national and sexual identity.

As evidenced by Confucian ideological writings, Nationalist rhetoric, changing government policies, media documentation, and the emergence of *tongzhi* literature, the Taiwanese *tongzhi* identity is a recent, strategic reorientation of homosexuality in the public eye. From the emergence of a uniquely Taiwanese identity to the marginalization of sexual minorities under martial law, popular constructions of gay identities in Taiwan were formed largely in reaction to circumvent numerous attempts of suppression under Japanese and Nationalist rule. Concurrently shaped by Confucian values and newly imported Euro-American academia during Taiwan's period of rapid democratization and modernization in the late 1980s and early 1990s, male homosexuality transformed from a means of social control to a guarantee of national security. This paper will examine how the changing constructs of male homosexuality mirrors the contemporary emergence of a distinctly Taiwanese

national identity during and after the martial law period and how the regulation of male intimacy in a Confucian, patriarchal context became a crucial tool in Taiwan's modern crusade for international recognition.⁵

The Emergence of Taiwanese Unity and Sexual Fluidity in Colonial Taiwan

The intertwined nature of Taiwan's distinct cultural identity and homosexuality in the modern era traces its roots to the period of Japanese imperialism. Due to Taiwan's complex geopolitical history of immigration and colonialism, the modern understanding of the Taiwanese identity is nuanced and varied. Under Japanese imperialism in the early 20th century, a unified Taiwanese identity emerged for the first time, as well as formal regulation of sexual relations and intimacy. Previously, the population of Taiwan consisted of indigenous groups, which were not unified and whose cultures varied greatly, and Hoklo and Hakka peoples from the Fujian Province in China, who identified with their Chinese villages of origin even hundreds of years after immigrating.⁶ Thus, when Taiwan became Imperial Japan's first experiment with colonization, the Japanese assimilationist programs, which aimed to integrate Taiwan as the "model colony" of the Japanese Empire, marked a soft beginning in the formation of a national Taiwanese identity.⁷ Through an aggressive modernization agenda, Japan invested heavily in Taiwan to reap human and natural capital.⁸ As part of the initiative to assimilate Taiwanese people into the Japanese Empire, the Governor-General of Taiwan established a comprehensive public education system and a university under the Imperial Universities system to teach the Japanese language and moral education.⁹ All industries and parts of society were targets of Japanese influence, even sexual relations, and sex work.

Japanese culture did not historically enforce strict normative gender and sexual preferences, as "the expression of private sexual practice has tended to be overlooked by both state and religious authorities."¹⁰ Historically, Japanese men of different statuses enjoyed fluid sexual practices within a code of ethics termed *nanshoku* (male eroticism)—these men included samurais, priests, and commoners alike.¹¹ As such, the Japanese government in colonial Taiwan did not criminalize or even target same-sex relations, though such intimacy did remain on the margins of the dominant narrative. Under Japanese rule, geisha houses and Japanese-style coffee houses were established, licensed, and legally allowed to operate in authorized districts.¹² After the popularity of geisha house culture declined in the 1930s, hostess culture proliferated throughout Taiwan during the mid-1940s. Coffee houses known colloquially as *kissaten* (tea-sipping stores) were directly imported from Japan, serving as a hypersexual space for elite men to build alliances and strategize in an "overtly masculinist environment."¹³ Working at both geisha houses and coffee houses were both highly stigmatized, as those who worked there often had no other employment prospects and lived among the lowest echelons of society.¹⁴ Though hostess culture did not explicitly require or largely involve transactional

sex, the connotations of hostess work implied an association with prostitution which later became a central target of the Nationalist regime.

38 Years of Martial Law and Policing Sexual Deviancy

In 1945, the Republic of China led by the Nationalist Kuomintang party (KMT) gained administrative control over the island after the surrender of Japan, which had ruled the island as a colony for fifty years, and promptly repatriated most of the Japanese residing in Taiwan back to Japan.¹⁵ In September of that year, the Republic of China set up the Office of the Chief Executive of Taiwan Province to oversee the island. As the Republic of China imposed harshly oppressive rule in comparison to the previous Japanese government, many civilians viewed the new Mainland government as “pigs” that replaced the “dogs.”¹⁶ In the same way that the Japanese government imposed learning the Japanese language and proudly displayed photos of the Japanese emperor in public spaces, the Nationalists institutionalized the foreign Mandarin Chinese dialect and replaced pictures of the Japanese emperor with ones of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.¹⁷ Though most of Taiwan’s population at the time was Han Chinese, the KMT believed that prolonged Japanese colonialism had tainted their Chinese political and cultural values.

Concurrently, clashes between the Communists and the Nationalists intensified, as the KMT progressively lost control over Chinese territory. During the civil war, thousands of Chinese refugees fled to Taiwan as negotiations between the KMT and the Communist Party of China (CPC) repeatedly failed. The Chinese Communist Revolution immediately following the surrender of Japan cemented the Communist Party of China’s stronghold over China and the decline of the Nationalist Party, as Chiang attempted and failed to enforce martial law over China.

The first declaration of martial law in Taiwan was implemented in 1947, due to the February 28 massacre in which the Kuomintang-led Republic of China government killed thousands of civilians in an attempt to violently suppress an anti-government uprising. Enraged by the new regime, Taiwan’s civilians resented the corrupt KMT authorities and the unemployment, disease, and economic inflation that the new regime had brought.¹⁸ The originally peaceful protest march quickly escalated when four protesters were shot and killed by machine guns fired from atop the Governor-General’s office building.¹⁹ As riots spread throughout the island in response to the shooting, the Governor-General imposed martial law, killing over a thousand unarmed civilians in the week that followed.²⁰ For two months, the Nationalist military regime executed between three and four thousand civilians, mostly intellectual elites and civic leaders who posed a threat of resistance. In December of 1949, the military victory of the Communist Party forced the Kuomintang-led Republic of China government to fully retreat all forces from China to Taiwan. After retreating, the KMT subsequently endorsed a second declaration of nationwide martial law. From 20 May 1949 to 14 July

1987, a record-setting thirty-eight years, martial law was imposed over the island of Taiwan by the military regime of the Republic of China.

As the Republic of China continued to claim sovereignty over all of China in defiance of the Communist People's Republic of China, martial law became a vehicle through which the Kuomintang-led government sought to cement their political and cultural stronghold over Taiwan. During this period of martial law, alternatively dubbed the White Terror, the Kuomintang government mercilessly prosecuted communist sympathizers, the intellectual and social elite, and other dissidents. Wounded by their spectacular loss to the Communists, the KMT sought to rebuild their Chinese empire by first purifying Taiwan. Though mostly ethnic Han Chinese, Taiwan's population at the time was divided into three distinct categories: *benshengren* (本省人), Han Chinese Hoklo and Hakka residents who lived in Taiwan before the Communist Revolution, *waishengren* (外省人), Han Chinese immigrants who arrived during or after the Revolution, and *yuanzhumin* (原住民), Austronesian indigenous peoples who comprised a small percentage of the island's population and were targets of KMT cultural assimilation programs.²¹ As the exiled KMT government and many *waishengren* viewed *benshengren* as ethnic Chinese who were tainted by Japanese influence, the government subsequently implemented a decolonizing and recolonizing agenda supported by national ethical codes, institutionalized social norms, and absolute police authority.²²

After being ousted from China, the KMT government sought to “redefine Taiwan as the center of ‘free China’ and the true home of Confucian culture” in response to the Communist Party's authoritarian regime and attempt to purge Confucianism during the Cultural Revolution.²³ Thus, the Nationalists carried out a series of Sinocentric reform programs designed to eradicate Japan's colonial legacy in Taiwan and enshrine Chinese culture as imagined by the Nationalist party. This large-scale effort to enshrine Taiwan as “a bastion of traditional Chinese Culture” was composed of numerous re-Sinification efforts to promote cultural reconstruction and Confucian morals throughout the government's ethical codes.²⁴ This strategy of emphasizing filial piety within Taiwan's society helped establish the KMT's Nationalist respectability, as Confucianism advocated respecting teachers and authority figures as a foundational practice for social order.

With the KMT's emphasis on Confucian family values and structure, Chiang's one-party state aggressively “heterosexualized” Taiwan's society primarily through policing and nationalized ethical codes to create a unified national identity.²⁵ The KMT's reliance on policing during this period was largely reactionary in response to the instability of the regime on the island as well as external threats in the tumultuous postwar period, namely Communist China. The Confucian construct of familism pervaded both national policies and private life, positing that familial governance served as a micro-unit of control within the state. This line of thought also applied in reverse; family served as a model for the state and governance was likened to familial authority. As Taiwan's postwar moral

guardian, Chiang relegated moral and legal authority to the police forces to uphold the ideals of the KMT. To do so, the Police Offence Law was enacted in 1943 and unconstitutionally enforced through 1991, as the Constitution of the Republic of China was adopted in 1947 and should have invalidated the earlier Police Offence Law. This enabled the KMT-led government to regulate, criminalize, and prosecute deviance in both the public and private spheres.²⁶ Under Chiang's guidance, the police assumed subordinate roles as moral guardians within society, tasked with the responsibility of enabling "all the people to become *guomin* [good national citizens]."²⁷ In a 1953 speech to students at the Central Police College, Chiang expanded on the idea of governing authorities as familial authoritative figures by calling on the future policemen to "govern the people as their parents and teachers in guiding, teaching, and disciplining them."²⁸ This dichotomy that Chiang promoted throughout postwar Taiwan and the KMT's police forces is eerily reminiscent of the Confucian *shengwang* (聖王, sage-king) paradigm, a moral hierarchy in which *junzi* (君子, those of noble character) is responsible for benevolently governing and guiding morally inferior subjects as theorized in the Four Books of Confucianism.^{29,30} This interpretation of Confucian respectability situated within postwar Taiwan dichotomized relationships in the state and society in a patriarchal, morally superior/inferior hierarchy: leader/subject, teacher/student, father/son, and husband/wife. The institutionalization and moral authority of the police to uphold the nation's *shanliang fengsu* (善良風俗, virtuous custom) was used to regulate sexual relations and police sexual deviancy in accordance to Confucian respectability. This guise of Confucian respectability served to create the illusion that the police served the people while obscuring the police force's true motive of protecting the KMT regime from internal instability that purportedly stemmed from sexual deviancy amongst other factors.

To further the reach of the Police Offence Law, the KMT government passed the Police Law in 1953, the first formal legal document outlining the tasks of the police force, designating *zhengsu* (正俗, redressing the customs) as a duty of the police administration.³¹ This emphasis on cleansing "backward," non-traditional practices was used largely to target sexual deviancy. The Police Law also granted the police power over deciding punishments of violations of the law.³² Though the Police Law only outlawed heterosexual prostitution and was largely used to close down hostess businesses, the cultural emphasis on "virtuous custom" allowed for free interpretation and the merciless policing of male homosexual prostitution in particular. Despite the official promulgation of the Police Law in 1953, Taiwan's police forces had already begun the crusade to purge prostitution as early as 1946 citing that "our Taiwanese countrymen were allowed under the Japanese occupation to wallow in immorality which must be rectified."³³ This equation of prostitution and immorality with Japanese occupation distorted the police's efforts to criminalize sexual deviancy into a tool of Nationalist respectability. The dominant narrative of respectability positioned homosexuality as morally inferior to the KMT's heterosexual power within the superior/inferior "sage-king" paradigm. Since Japanese

geisha houses and hostess culture both influenced Taiwan's prostitution culture, policing prostitution became a state tool to eradicate Japanese influence and uphold Chinese Nationalist ideals. In stark contrast to the rigid gender and sex norms of the KMT regime, remnants of Japan's tolerance for sexual fluidity also served as a reminder of Japanese influence. Ridding Taiwan of prostitution and homosexuality would thereby allow for the proliferation of Confucian familial ideals and the reconstruction of Chinese national identity in Taiwan's Han Chinese populace.

Though much of the public and political dialogue of policing sexual deviancy centered on female prostitution and colonial Japanese institutions of sex work, police regulation of male homosexual prostitution was very much central to upholding the illusion of Nationalist respectability. Homosexuality remained obscured in dominant discourse except through the vessel of policing prostitution. Even then, documentation and discussion of male homosexual prostitution remained on the margins of society; any mention or even subtle implication of homosexuality remained notably absent in legal codes. Due to this absence, there was no form of categorization for male same-sex contact, which in turn was tied to ideas of prostitution and cross-dressing. Alternatively, male homosexuality was policed under the guise of either wearing *qizhuang yifu* (奇裝異服, bizarre outfits) or conduct that was *fanghai fenghua* (妨害風化, deleterious to virtuous customs of social morals).³⁴ The construct of *renyao* (人妖), a highly politicized image stemming from Republican Chinese stereotypes of effeminate or gender-nonconforming men, was innately associated with male homosexuality.³⁵³⁶ Oftentimes, these men were insulted using the phrase '*bunan bunu*' (不男不女) meaning "neither male nor female" in reference to the ambiguity of their gender performance. Not only did the nonconformity of these men challenge patriarchal gender norms, but the prospect of same-sex relations also threatened the Confucian foundation that the maintenance of order in Chinese society was predicated upon. A 1932 article from the newspaper *Tianfengbao* (天風報, Heavenly Wind News) posits that "the country is on the verge of extinction because freaks and monsters are present. Such a person probably is *renyao*."³⁷ The idea of male same-sex relations directly threatened the tradition of patrilineal continuity within Confucian Chinese society in the same way that perceived male effeminacy threatened Nationalist masculinity. Part of this Nationalist masculine narrative expected sons to fulfill their fathers' goals of winning back the mainland in addition to their responsibility of providing for the family. The article directly ties this political and social responsibility to the maintenance of Nationalist masculinity, likening sexual deviancy to the nation's extinction. As such, male effeminacy and nonconformity to gender norms were seen as a risk to destabilizing notions of Nationalist masculinity and were thus used as coded language for policing homosexuality, especially around Taipei's New Park.

Newspaper coverage of the New Park highlights its implicit association with male prostitution and *renyao*. Though male prostitutes were known to initially populate the red light district around

Sanshui Street, the *Lianhebao* (聯合報, United Daily) exposed the growing numbers of male prostitutes around the New Park as early as 1959 and called for the installation of street lamps and police patrols.³⁸ By the early 1980s, the issue of male prostitution around the New Park garnered a large public following as numerous press outlets published articles on the “homosexual culture of prostitution.”³⁹ An American magazine even called the New Park “Taiwan’s male prostitute supply centre.”⁴⁰ This newfound media coverage transformed KMT policing of male homosexuality from a series of individual cases to a full crusade of policing “clean-up” operations, as public notions of the gay community shifted from sparse conceptions of individual dissidents to the vivid imagery of an entire underground network. In stark contrast to the 1932 *Tianfengbao* newspaper article, written about a single amateur Beijing opera *dan* 旦 actor, the rhetoric used in Taiwan’s newspapers in the late 1970s and early 1980s instead paints a picture of a growing, dangerous, homosexual subculture.⁴¹ A 1980 special report from the *Lianhebao* posits that “there used to be only a few homosexuals plying their trade individually... But given their recent increase in numbers, they divide the market into different regions within which they ply their trade as a group.”⁴² The credibility of the assertion of growing numbers of male prostitutes is questionable, given the sweeping generalization of all gay men as prostitutes. Regardless, the optics that this report conveys supports the general misconception of homosexuality as inherently transactional and organized. Similarly, an article from *Dazhong Ribao* (大眾日報, Public Daily) frames the male prostitutes in the New Park as runaway children supporting themselves by prostituting their bodies to older men. Forced into prostitution due to a lack of financial or familial support, the report describes how young boys are pimped out in an expansive underground *renyao* business. This article not only highlights the organization of the male prostitution business but also emphasizes the involvement of minors, further exacerbating the idea of homosexuality as an attack on Confucian family values.

Throughout the newspaper coverage of the New Park, journalistic discourse noticeably equates male homosexuality and prostitution which in turn obscures the possibility of non-transactional same-sex intimacy. The roots of this journalistic notion stem from police training, in which the chief police officer Li Jinzhen taught students at the Central Police College how to “police homosexuals [male prostitutes].”⁴³ In this curriculum, Li posited that male prostitutes used a numbered code language to refer to different categories of homosexual activity signifying the type of roles they took on in the sex trade. One of Li’s articles, published in the 1980 *45th Anniversary of the Central Police College Special Publication*, featured a brief that was given to his subordinates in which he encouraged officers to pretend to pursue a sexual relationship with a purported male prostitute, provoke them into revealing information about punishable behavior, and then arrest them.⁴⁴ The practices of policing homosexuality developed by Li were subsequently given a national platform in a serialized report by the *Taiwan Daily* titled “The Elegy of Homosexuals.”⁴⁵ This tell-all report quoted

Li to expose the hidden inner workings of homosexuality, thus equated with male prostitution. Due to this journalistic practice, there was no separation between male homosexuality and prostitution as gay men were apprehended as male prostitutes despite their actual line of work. This strategic framing within the media combined with state-sponsored criminalization of sexual deviancy served to paint an image of male homosexuality not only as a threat to Nationalist respectability and Confucian familism but also as an inherently immoral, pervasive scheme conceived by unvirtuous men. As such, Taipei's New Park became infamously associated with male prostitution and heavy policing in response to government fears and media constructions of an imagined gay community riddled with promiscuity and immorality.

Crystal Boys in Taipei New Park and the Appeal to Confucian Familism

Aside from police and journalistic documentation, few primary sources exist from the martial law era to illustrate the lived experiences of Taiwanese gay men; such an era of social control and restriction of self-expression, much less sexuality, did not allow for open recognition of the gay community. However, as martial law relaxed in its later years, renowned Chinese author Pai Hsien-Yung, the son of a KMT general and *waishengren* immigrant to Taiwan, published his novel “*Nieb Tse*” (孽子, Crystal Boys) in 1983, which depicts Taipei New Park's developing gay subculture amongst the backdrop of Taiwan's martial law regime in the late-1970s.⁴⁶ Though Pai was not a gay-rights activist himself, the novel gained widespread success and acclaim for its role in publicly pioneering gay and queer movements in an era where dissent or opposition against ideological state apparatuses came at the risk of arrest, imprisonment, and even execution. Taipei New Park served as a social center for gay men in the late-1970s and male homosexual social and sexual activity in the area dates as far back as the era of Japanese colonization when the park was originally established as the Taihoku New Park in 1900. With the New Park's reputation for homosexuality came unbridled policing as the homosexual community was largely equated with male prostitution and prosecuted heavily for defying government-defined social norms. This historical context serves as the backdrop for the novel, which explores the stigmatization of the gay community and the policing of male prostitution during martial law. Throughout the novel, themes of Confucian respectability and sexual shame that the KMT instituted as part of their “re-Sinification” agenda are intertwined with male homosexuality and nation-building, reflecting the impact of the Police Offence Law in Pai's fictional recreation of the lives of Taiwan's gay youth.

Dedicated to “that group of homeless kids wandering alone on the streets in the deepest, darkest hour of the night,” *Crystal Boys* follows a group of male adolescents living as prostitutes in the neighborhood surrounding the park through the lens of A-Qing.⁴⁷ In the novel, A-Qing is outed for a same-sex encounter with his chemistry lab supervisor, expelled from school, estranged from his family,

and subsequently discovers the gay community in Taipei New Park. Many of the young boys who frequent the park can sympathize with A-Qing's situation due to their own banishment from home, and most work as male prostitutes to make a living. Chief Yang, who serves as the father figure to these young boys, takes A-Qing into what he comes to consider as his replacement home. There, A-Qing meets Little Jade, Wu Min, and Mousy and the four quickly become friends and spend their evenings sharing stories with others in New Park. One night, the police arrest A-Qing and several other boys at the park while enforcing the new late-night curfew targeted at the park's reputation for male prostitutes. This prompts Chief Yang and a former KMT general by the name of Papa Fu to open an underground gay bar. Papa Fu, haunted by his son's suicide due to his unwillingness to accept his sexuality, takes A-Qing under his wing in an attempt to atone for his regrets. In the end, however, Cozy Nest is forced to close after tabloid newspapers discover the bar, subsequently separating the boys as they each search for a new means of survival.

The title, *Crystal Boys* or *Nieb Tse*, directly translates to “cursed sons” or “sinful sons,” referencing the Buddhist and Daoist ideology of *chengfu* (承負, suffering as a consequence of the actions of one's ancestors). In the context of this book, Pai's conscious choice of the title argues that the gay son's sin of nonconforming sexuality is a product of his father's sins. This argument is also reminiscent of classical Confucian ideology in which the shortcomings of children can be directly attributed to ineffective parenting.⁴⁸ By invoking the argument of parental responsibility, Pai uses the dominant ideology of Confucian values to make a sympathetic appeal in favor of the gay community. As A-Qing's banishment serves as the starting point for his personal struggles and involvement in the community of male prostitutes at New Park, the argument of parental responsibility highlights the fact that Confucian familial values have failed him and doomed him to a life of struggle.

The decision to center the narrative on a school-aged boy also reflects historical reality and parallels newspaper coverage of a similar incident. While *Crystal Boys* mirrors many of the actual events occurring at the time, the author's writing provides an alternative perspective by humanizing the characters and appealing to the reader's empathy. Media coverage of male homosexuality at the time used statistics and skewed rhetoric to dehumanize “sexual dissidents,” largely reinforcing ideas of Nationalist respectability and masculinity. In stark contrast, *Crystal Boys* sheds light on the turmoil, oppression, emotional conflict, and shame that A-Qing and his peers experience as a result of state-enforced homophobia and systemic oppression. Upon initially getting outed to his family, A-Qing's father forces him out of the house at gunpoint, screaming, “you scum! You filthy scum!”⁴⁹ In the original text, the term used for scum, *chusheng* (畜生), translates literally to “domestic animal” and is reserved for those of higher status within the Confucian hierarchy to dehumanize subordinates as useless animals. The use of this insult holds a doubly offensive meaning in this context; the lack of filial piety invoked through the term *chusheng* highlights A-Qing's inability to serve both his country and

his family. Notably, A-Qing's father wields the pistol that he had used as a brigade commander back on the Mainland, reinforcing the Nationalist masculine ideal in which sons carry the responsibility of their fathers' unfinished quest to reclaim mainland China. This emphasis on A-Qing's duty to the Nationalist regime, in essence, represents how family reflects society within Confucian society. A-Qing's "disrespect" towards his father is interpreted as a failure to serve the state. The storyline of Fu Wei, the son of Papa Fu who dies by suicide in the novel, similarly highlights the intertwined nature of filial piety and the state as he is outed for a same-sex relationship while serving in the army. At the same time, the importance of patrilineal family continuation prized the role of sons, as male heirs were crucial to continue the family line. A-Qing's inability to uphold the Confucian tradition of patrilineal family continuation, highly ingrained in religious practices of worshipping ancestors who provide for the family, serves as the second repercussion of sexual deviance. After meeting other young boys in his replacement home, their similar stories support this common narrative of politicized shame due to their families' reactions. Due to the unique iteration of homosexual shame present in the novel, rooted in the loss of familial support and the utilization of state-sponsored shame, *Crystal Boys* instead presents an intimate conversation on the suffering of social exile and banishment from the family—the most important relationship in Confucian culture.

In addition to appealing to empathy by highlighting the characters' emotional suffering, *Crystal Boys* also goes a step further to appeal to the Confucian culture as a whole to accept and support male homosexuality. In the novel, A-Qing and the other young boys seek alternative forms of paternal relationships to fill the void left from being disowned by their own fathers. Both Chief Yang and Papa Fu serve as paternal figures to A-Qing, guiding them through the new environment that he has been thrown into. The sexual relationships that A-Qing and his friends engage in with older men are reminiscent of a "sugar-daddy" dynamic, transaction yet somewhat emotionally fulfilling. For example, the partially co-habitual relationship between Wu Min and Mr. Zhang was underscored by a theme of domesticity as Wu Min cleaned and cooked at Mr. Zhang's demand. When Mr. Zhang compliments Wu Min's bean-sauce carp, Wu Min says to A-Qing: "You don't know how happy that made me, because I figured he really liked me."⁵⁰ The relationship between the two is simultaneously sexual and familial, compensating for these young boys' two dominant sources of shame. This emphasis on the innate need for parental guidance and family support is used to appeal to Confucian respectability. At the end of the novel, A-Qing leaves the world of male prostitution and finds a job under the guidance and discipline of Papa Fu. The trajectory of A-Qing's experience posits that the root of his sexual deviancy lies within the lack of a proper father-son relationship. His first encounter with male prostitution occurs after his father disowns him; his last days as a male prostitute can be credited to the positive influence of Papa Fu. This approach strategically appeals to the novel's readers, urging the populace to empathize with gay men and at the very least refrain from disowning them.

Rather than making a case for full understanding and acceptance of homosexuality within Confucian society, *Crystal Boys* uses the threat of sexual deviancy as an appeal for mere tolerance. This strategy of utilizing tolerance as a baseline for gay rights continually underscores the development of Taiwan's gay rights movement as the ushering in of democracy and modernity opened the conversation of governance beyond the KMT party.

“*Tongzhi*” as a Distinctly Taiwanese Geopolitical, Confucian, and Sexual Identity

Though Taiwan's martial law period sought to instill a strongly regulated society founded on traditional Chinese values, American foreign policy initiatives planted the foundations for Westernization. Alongside the relaxation of martial law from the late 1970s through its official end in 1987, the increasing economic independence of Taiwan's middle class allowed for the proliferation of political liberalization. In 1986, the Democratic People's Party (DPP) formed out of a native Taiwanese political faction and quickly gained a large constituency primarily of *benshengren* to oppose the KMT and its *waishengren* stronghold. In response to prior violent confrontations, this political liberalization and emergence of the DPP was part of an effort to pacify growing ethnic tensions between the *waishengren* government and the *benshengren* populace, who identified strongly with a Taiwanese identity as a result of a weakened connection to the mainland through the years of Japanese colonialism and Nationalist rule. In 1988, Lee Teng-hui became the first *benshengren* to lead the KMT party, ushering in a number of other *benshengren* politicians as well as a reconceptualization of Taiwan's nationhood as a globalized democracy. The rise of a national Taiwanese identity at the turn of the decade was largely founded on resisting reunification with China and preserving Taiwan's ideological independence as a “postcolonial” democracy, influenced by the newly attained political prowess of *benshengren*, import of Western culture, and neoliberal structures, as well as the cross-strait arms race with Beijing.

As part of Taiwan's crusade for globalization and international recognition, Taiwan's academic sphere quickly globalized as Taiwanese academics brought back Western ideas and queer theory from their years studying abroad. Upon returning, many of these U.S.-trained academics became professors at Taiwan's leading universities and incorporated Euro-American ideas into Taiwan's developing discourse around sexual minorities. The development of the *tongzhi* identity at the outset of political and social liberalization can heavily be attributed to the impact of Euro-American queer theory, as scholars challenged the KMT regime's institutionalized heteronormativity by introducing studies of identity politics, sexualities, intimacies, and equality. Due to the drastic societal shift between state-enforced Confucian heterosexuality to the influx of Western influence, “Taiwan is one place where Euro-American queer theory has had a very strong impact and

has for the past several years been in the process of creative adaptation and localization for research focusing on the dissident sexual culture within Taiwan.”⁵¹

Before the adoption of *tongzhi* as the term to refer to sexual minorities, the common understanding of homosexuality was referred to by the concept of *tongxinglian* (同性戀).⁵² In Chinese, the word *tongzhi* refers to “comrade” and is used as a common address term in Communist China though the term was first used by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in the years preceding the establishment of Republican China. The ‘National Father’ of the Republic of China and the founder of the KMT, Dr. Sun used the term *tongzhi* to describe his followers as comrades united in the same struggle. In the late 1980s, gay rights activists in Hong Kong appropriated the term as a label for sexual minorities by utilizing its literal meaning of “comrade” as a positive and unifying term for same-sex love. This usage was subsequently adopted by Taiwanese academics in the early 1990s. The use of the term *tongzhi* as a more appropriate term than *tongxinglian*, which invokes distinct pathological connotations, loosely mirrors the Western use of “gay” instead of “homosexual.” Literally translating to “same will,” *tongzhi* is a desexualized alternative that invokes solidarity within the gay community while also centering the term’s reference to the family-kinship system rather than the individual’s sexual preference. In the Taiwanese context, the term is an homage to the island’s political roots in Nationalist governance as well as a reflection of the integral role of Confucian family structures in Taiwan’s society.

Though *Crystal Boys* initially was not well received, Taiwanese academics in the 1980s retroactively emphasized its importance as the first *tongzhi* novel because it discussed homosexuality within social structures of filial piety. As the concept of filial piety underscores both the institutionalization of Nationalist respectability and modern Confucian culture, contemporary scholars have theorized the *tongzhi* movement around the integration of *tongzhi* children into Taiwan’s family structures.⁵³ As the appropriation of the term *tongzhi* sought to frame Taiwan’s gay community in a more positive and acceptable light, the *tongzhi* movement, in turn, focused on destigmatizing the historical roots of homosexuality in Taiwan. To do so, *tongzhi* sexual politics was largely occupied by transforming the image of the gay community by erasing the historical association of homosexuality with prostitution and promoting the idea of the “respectful *tongzhi*” who strived to be filial to their parents. As Taiwan’s cultural discourse of homosexuality is uniquely literary and academic (a stark contrast to a number of grassroots movements in Western societies) this reimagination of the *tongzhi* identity was conducted in the academic sphere. Taiwan’s first organized gay society, Gay Chat, was founded at National Taiwan University in 1992. In their published journal *Tongxinglian Banglian* (同性戀邦聯, The United States of Homosexuality), these students sought to designate Taipei New Park as a gay social space to counter the park’s history of male prostitution. The author of the article, Ma Lu, argues that the park serves as a space to meet friends rather than seek sexual offers. In doing so, Ma obscures the park’s history of policing and understates the role of male

prostitution to impose a modern, acceptable veil of respectable homosexuality. The idea of respectful *tongzhi* proliferated and became mainstream during the 1990s as *tongzhi* activists, mostly from middle-class academic backgrounds, situated the dominant discourse of *tongzhi* communities around the struggle for familial acceptance in line with the emotional appeal of *Crystal Boys*.⁵⁴ The collective erasure of Taiwan's history of policing and performance of conformity within Confucian culture contributed to a modern *tongzhi* stereotype, distinguished by its elite membership and craving for familial validation.

In the same way that Taiwan's modern *tongzhi* identity and community was strategically shaped by Nationalist respectability and masculine norms, the *tongzhi* community's crusade for gay rights and same-sex marriage has similarly shaped the development of modern Taiwanese nationalism. After the United Nations moved to recognize the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate representative of China in 1971, Taiwan's political agenda has undoubtedly been shaped by the island's existential imperative to differentiate itself from China, which claims the island as a renegade province. As mainland China has continuously faced criticism from the Western world for its authoritarian regime and regular human rights violations, the newly democratized Taiwanese government has engaged in a spectacularly performative worship of Western ideals of democracy, natural rights, and freedom. Just as the *tongzhi* identity created a new image of the gay community as an elite yet emotionally unfulfilled population seeking familial validation, the Taiwanese government painted a vivid picture of a young burgeoning democracy with a rapidly developing economy yearning for international recognition.

Due to Taiwan's multicultural population, the homogeneity of a distinctly similar Taiwanese identity is a fairly modern phenomenon. However, despite the ethnic and cultural differences of Taiwan's populace, the idealization of democracy and disdain towards the Communist Chinese state serves as a point of unity. This shared ideology combined with two historical iterations of assimilationist programs has fostered an increasingly popular identification with the label "Taiwanese" rather than "Chinese." As China emerged as a rapidly growing economic power during the 1980s, alongside the democratization of Taiwan and the reconceptualization of *tongzhi*, Taiwan's independence rested wholly on the island's ability to maintain the United States' political support against the threat of Chinese authoritarianism. By touting a seemingly perfect democratic government boasting an exemplary record of economic development, and sweeping decades of violent oppression under the rug, Taiwan's projection of soft power as a "beacon of democracy to Asia and the world" is integral to the island's national security agenda. In line with this practice, both major political parties have supported legislation that, at the very least, uphold a facade of progressiveness by affording legal rights to same-sex couples.

Taiwan's legalization of same-sex marriage in 2017 serves as a prime example of how the island's geopolitical and cultural history of homosexuality is innately intertwined with Taiwan's national agenda. Such a strategic reorientation of popular conceptions of homosexuality into the creation of the distinctly Taiwanese *tongzhi* identity can be directly attributed to *tongzhi* activists' deliberate circumvention of historically oppressive images of sexual deviancy and insubordination, rooted in Nationalist masculinity and Confucian respectability. Likewise, the development of Taiwan's distinct national identity and national security agenda, born of the same historically oppressive forces, is reliant on the mainstream acceptance of the *tongzhi* identity to uphold Taiwan's functional independence. This unlikely symbiotic relationship between Taiwanese nationalism and the Taiwanese *tongzhi* identity is deeply entrenched in Taiwan's claim of self-sovereignty.

Conclusion: Reflections on the Roots of “*Tongzhi*” in Taipei New Park

Taipei New Park, the primary setting for Pai Hsien-Yung's *Crystal Boys*, was renamed the 228 Peace Memorial Park in 1996 to commemorate the lives lost in the February 28 massacre and the subsequent period of martial law. In many ways, Taipei's New Park, regardless of its seemingly ever-changing name, serves as a relevant metaphor for the development of Taiwan's national identity and the *tongzhi* identity that underscores the national crusade for Taiwanese self-governance. Throughout the eras of Japanese colonialism, Nationalist martial law, and the beginnings of Westernization, public perceptions of the park have similarly evolved from one of unaffected gay interaction to a cesspool of immorality to an imagined social refuge for sexual minorities. Today, the park serves as a site for political protest, having hosted demonstrations for indigenous rights and Black Lives Matter over the past five years. Historically, the park served dually as a representation in the name and image of the governing regime and its respective discourse on homosexuality. The 228 Peace Memorial Park's distinctly singular association with Taiwan's modern era of freedom and democracy today serves as a fitting portrayal of the intertwined nature of Taiwan's *tongzhi* and nationalist identities and agendas.

Notes

1. Jody Chen is a former undergraduate student at the University of California, Santa Barbara.
2. For the sake of consistency, I will use Hanyu Pinyin (漢語拼音) throughout this article for romanizations of Chinese characters; Andrew D. Wong, "The Reappropriation of Tongzhi." *Language in Society*, vol. 34, no. 05, 12 Oct. 2005.
3. The meaning of the term "nationalist" varies with its capitalization. Nationalist (with a capital N) refers to the Chinese Nationalist Party, also known as the Kuomintang (KMT), whereas nationalist (without the capital N) refers to the ideology of nationalism.
4. I use mainland China and China depending on the sentence's context. In situations where Taiwan is assumed to be a part of China, such as by those who believe that the Republic of China government rightfully claims sovereignty over territory currently ruled by the People's Republic of China, I will refer to that land as mainland China. Otherwise, I will refer to China and Taiwan as two separate entities to reflect the two distinctly separate governments that are both functionally self-sovereign, regardless of the political controversy surrounding Taiwan's status as a sovereign state.
5. This paper focuses specifically on male same-sex intimacy as a means of social control during and after the martial law period. For further literature on Taiwan's lesbian identities and the T/Po (婆, butch/femme) duo, I would recommend the many works of Antonia Chao, a leading academic in the field.
6. Recent scholarship has highlighted numerous issues with conceptualizing Han as an overarching ethnic identification due to the historical roots of the "Han" identity as well as the diversity of the population. In this paper, Han Chinese is used as a catch-all term to refer to the entire group of Chinese settlers in Taiwan. Today, Han Chinese comprises approximately 95 percent of Taiwan's total population and indigenous people roughly 2 percent. (Department of Information Services Executive Yuan, 2014); Alan Wachman. *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 15-16.
7. The full text of the Shimonoseki Treaty is available at <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/shimonoseki01.htm>; Patricia E. Tsurumi, "Education and Assimilation in Taiwan under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945." *Modern Asian Studies* 13, no. 4 (1979), 617.; WanYao Chou, "The Kōminka Movement: Taiwan under Wartime Japan, 1937-1945". Ph.D. diss., (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1991), 123-124.
8. Thomas B. Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1986), 44.
9. Stéphane Corcuff and Robert Edmondson, *Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan* (London: Routledge, 2015), 26.

10. Mark McLelland and Katsuhiko Suganuma, "Sexual Minorities and Human Rights in Japan: A Historical Perspective," in *Protection of Sexual Minorities since Stonewall: Progress and Stalemate in Developed and Developing Countries*, edited by Phil C. W. Chan (New York: Routledge, 2010), 197.
11. McLelland, "Sexual Minorities," 197.
12. Hans Tao-Ming Huang. "State Power, Prostitution and Sexual Order: Towards a Genealogical Critique of 'Virtuous Custom.'" *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (2004), 239.
13. Andrew D. Morris, *Japanese Taiwan: Colonial Rule and Its Contested Legacy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 203.
14. Avron Boretz, "Carousing and Masculinity: The Cultural Production of Gender in Taiwan." *Women in the New Taiwan: Gender Roles and Gender Consciousness in a Changing Society*, Routledge, 2004, 181.
15. Kuomintang is the phonetic translation of the official party name in Chinese. In English, the KMT is also referred to as the Chinese Nationalist Party (CNP) and as the Nationalists in shorthand, just as the Communists refer to the Communist Party of China. Throughout this paper, KMT and Nationalists are used interchangeably to refer to the Kuomintang Party led by Chiang Kai-Shek.
16. Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 27.
17. In the standard format for Chinese names, the family name comes first and is followed by the personal name. The family name will be used in subsequent references to individuals.
18. American Embassy, Nanking, China. *Memorandum on the Situation in Taiwan (Report)*. August 1949.
19. American Embassy, *Memorandum*.
20. Tillman Durdin. "Formosa Killings Are Put at 10,000." *New York Times*. March 28, 1947.
21. Henrietta Harrison. "Clothing and Power on the Periphery of Empire: The Costumes of the Indigenous People of Taiwan." *Positions Asia Critique* 11, no. 2 (2003), 333.
22. Liqun Cao, Lanying Huang, and Ivan Y. Sun. *Policing in Taiwan: from Authoritarianism to Democracy*. London: Routledge, 2016, 27.
23. Fed Y L Chiu. "Suborientalism and the Subimperialist Predicament: Aboriginal Discourse and the Poverty of State-Nation Imagery." *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 8 (1). Duke University Press, 118.
24. John Makeham and Hsiao A-Chin. *Cultural, Ethnic, and Political Nationalism in Contemporary Taiwan*: Bentuhua. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 187.
25. Jens Damm. "Same-Sex Desire and Society in Taiwan, 1970 – 1987," *The China Quarterly* (2005), 68.
26. Hongdong Lin 林弘東 (1989) (ed.) *The Latest Edition of the Six Major Legal Categories 新編基本六法全書*, Taipei: Wunan 五南圖書.

27. Yukun Feng 鄧裕坤 (1958) 'President Chiang's contribution to and influence on the police in China' 總統對我國警察之貢獻及其影響, *Police and People Gazette* 警民導報 321:3-6.
28. Kai-shek Chiang 蔣介石 (1964) 'Everything has to be done from ground-up' 一切工作須從基層做起. In Central Police College (ed.) 中央警官學校 (編) *An Anthology of President Chiang's Admonitory Talks to the Police* 總統對警察人員訓辭選集, Taipei: Central Police Officer College 中央警官學校, 104 - 109.
29. In the Warring States and early imperial eras, tales of sage-kings heralded their divinity perhaps in an effort by authors to urge rulers to strive for unification of the different warring factions. This too may be comparable to the KMT's ultimate goal of reclaiming and reunifying Chinese lands, though I will not delve into that in this paper. For additional information about this topic, I would highly recommend Mark Edward Lewis' *Writing and Authority in Early China*.
30. The Four Books of Confucianism are: Great Learning, Doctrine of the Mean, Analects, and Mencius. The sage-king paradigm is extensively discussed in Mencius.
31. Lieming Wang 王烈民 (1958) *Security Police* 保安警察, Taipei: Central Police Officer College 中央警官學校.
32. Lieming Wang 王烈民 (1958) *Security Police* 保安警察, Taipei: Central Police Officer College 中央警官學校.
33. Hongxun Lin 林弘勳 (1997) 'Taipei city's abolition of licensed prostitution and the history of prostitution in Taiwan' 台北市廢娼與台灣娼妓史, *Contemporary Journal* 當代 122: 111.
34. Fran Martin. *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film and Public Culture*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003, 42.
35. *Ren Yao*, literally translates to either to 'human-spectre' or 'freak.'
36. Republican Chinese refers to the Republic of China from 1912-1949 when the Nationalist KMT government retained control over mainland China.
37. Kang Wen-qing. *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009, 36.
38. *Lianhe Bao* [The United Daily]: 'Xin Gongyuan Biancheng Nanchang Guan, Ying Su Zhuang Deng Pai Jing Xunluo' [New Park turns into a male brothel; the authorities should install street lamps and send police to patrol the area], 22nd Jan 1959.
39. Jinzhen Li 李錦珍 (1981) 'How to outlaw homosexuals-male prostitutes' 如何取締同性戀一男娼, *The 45th Anniversary of the Central Police College Special Publication* 中警四十五週年校慶特刊: 96.
40. Li, "How to Outlaw," 96.

41. *Dan* 旦 refers to female lead roles in the Beijing opera, played by both male and female actors. Similar to men playing female roles in Shakespearean England, *dan* roles were exclusively played by men in the early years of Beijing opera.
42. Wenbang Li 李文邦 (1980) 'Police clean up-sleeve quirks; 60 people arrested within a month' 警方掃蕩斷袖癖,月來查獲六十幾, *United Daily* 聯合報, 23 April.
43. Li, "How to Outlaw," 96.
44. Li, "How to Outlaw," 96.
45. Li, "How to Outlaw," 96.
46. Pai, Hsien-yung, *Crystal Boys* (1989).
47. Pai, *Crystal Boys* (1989), 2.
48. This idea was theorized by ancient Chinese scholar Yan Zhitui 顏之推, who wrote a twenty-six chapter book titled *yanshi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 ("The Family Instructions of Master Yan") detailing rules of how to govern the family.
49. Pai, *Crystal Boys* (1989), 13.
50. Pai, *Crystal Boys* (1989), 29.
51. Fran Martin and Peter Jackson, eds. *AsiaPacifiQueer: Rethinking Genders and Sexualities*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008, 12.
52. Layli Phillips. *The Womanist Reader: the First Quarter Century of Womanist Thought*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2006, 329.
53. Wah-shan Chou. "Homosexuality and the Cultural Politics of Tongzhi in Chinese Societies." *Journal of Homosexuality*. 40.3/4 (2001), 34.
54. Song-hwee Lim. *Celluloid Comrades: Representations of Male Homosexuality in Contemporary Chinese Cinemas*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 240.