

Treasures of Northern Taiwan

January 2024

Travel Talk at Riderwood

November 6, 2024

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Republic of China (ROC) is the official name of the country, whereas Mainland China is known as The People's Republic of China (PRC)

I'm going to refer to it as Taiwan tonight

Formosa: Portuguese for “beautiful”

How do the Olympics and the Little League World Series refer to this country?

Chinese Taipei.

**33 Metro
stops to
Dulles
Airport**

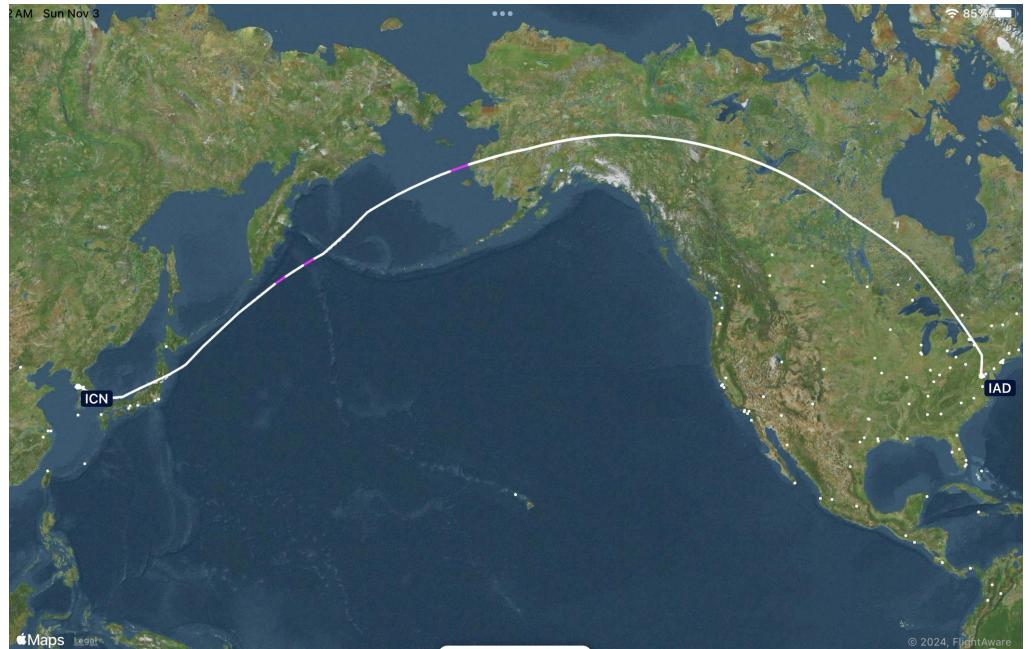


**Those of you who know me know
how much I love to take public
transportation!**

**From the end of the Green Belt line
to Dulles, with only one transfer, is
33 stops.**

\$3.35 one way for a Senior

**Dulles
to
Seoul,
Korea**



13 - 14 hours



**Seoul
to
Taipei**



3 hours

**My traveling
companions at
Sun Moon Lake**



**Justin Freedman and Yosung Song,
my son and daughter-in-law who
live in Seoul**

**near the Alishan Mountains in
central Taiwan, where they hiked for
a week before I arrived and met
them in Taipei**

central Taiwan



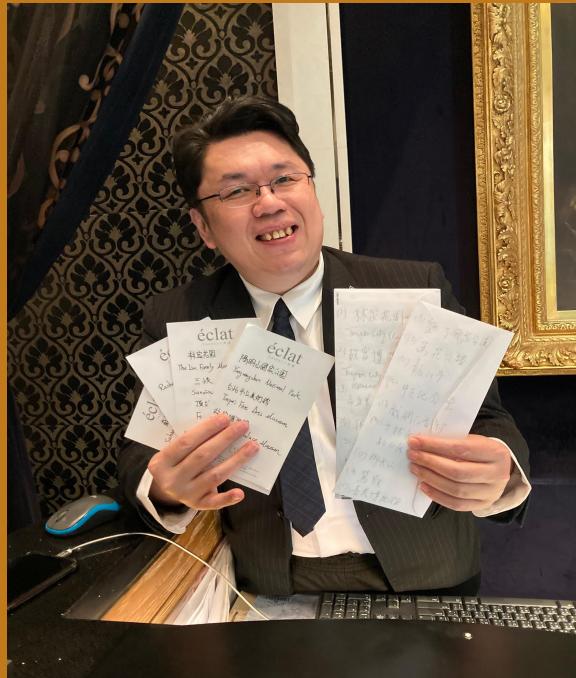
Do you recognize the name HWA LEE EN (Hualien), a large county over here on the East Coast?

That's where the April 3 earthquake was this year which killed 18 people.

Destinations tonight

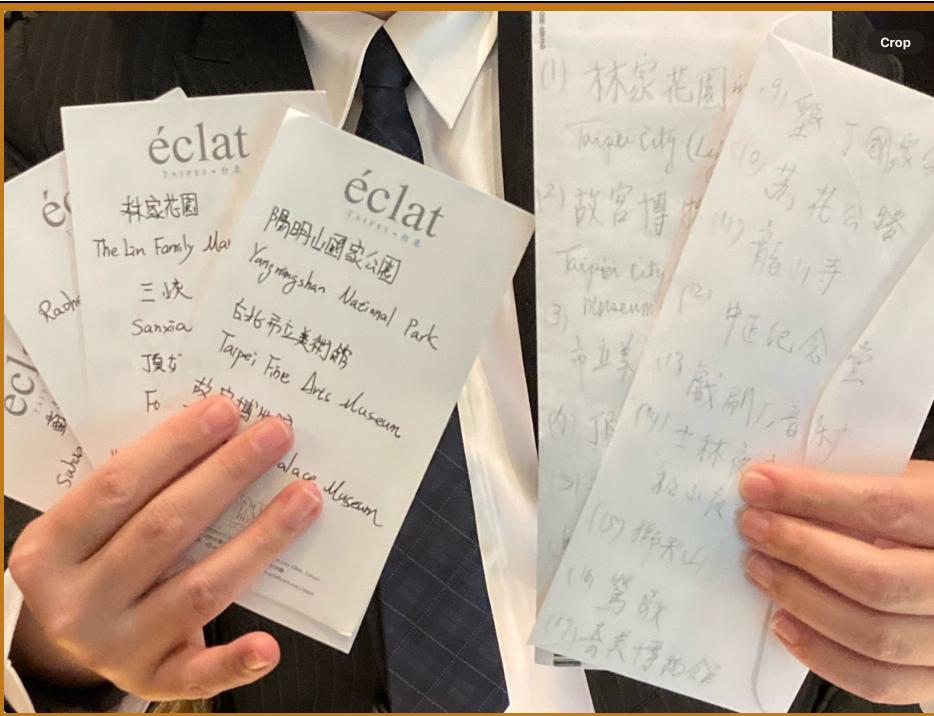
1. **The 228 Peace Memorial Park**
2. **A personal connection to Taipei**
3. **Liberty Square**
4. **Food**
5. **The National Palace Museum**
6. **The Zoo**
7. **Taipei 101**
8. **Yehlui Geopark**
9. **Shifen**
10. **Houtong**

Concierge at my hotel in Taipei



My friend had jotted down in Chinese a list of places I would enjoy visiting in Taipei.

Because I couldn't read them, I took them to the hotel Concierge and asked for his help



**He transcribed the list and
translated it into English for me...
Very helpful.**

Taiwan's Recent History

1624: colony established by Dutch East India Co.

1683: annexed by the Qing dynasty

1895: ceded to Japan

1945: governed by ROC and Chiang Kai-shek

On our way to the 228 Peace Memorial, let's just go over a bit of chronology in the recent history of Taiwan....

In addition to the Dutch, the Spanish established colonies in northern Taiwan but were ousted by the Dutch (in 1642)

A Chinese warlord ousted the Dutch

towards the end of the 1600s, after which Taiwan was annexed by the Qing Dynasty

After more wars, Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895.

During this time, Taiwan experienced economic development and an increased standard of living.

Japan's control ended after WWII in 1945 when the ROC and Chiang Kai-shek took control

Remember....Chiang Kai-shek was still on mainland China at this time, in charge of the ruling Kuomintang party

The 228 Peace Memorial Park

honoring protesters killed
during the February 28 Incident
in 1947

The park serves as a reminder of the darkest period in Taiwan's modern history: The 228 Incident

The 228 Memorial Monument



Two years after the ROC began to govern Taiwan 1945, a group of protesters, angry over a police action against Taiwanese, took over a radio station and used it to broadcast accusations/criticisms against Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang government.

Over the next 2 to 4 weeks, riots

occurred across the country which led to crackdowns and massacres.

One estimate is that between 10,000 and 20,000 people were killed.

Chiang Kai-shek instituted Martial Law 2 years after this, denying residents of the freedom to assemble and freedom of speech/publication.





The cube-shape design is to symbolize rebuilding after the 228 Incident.

The 228 Memorial Bell



28 February is now a national public holiday, called Peace Memorial Day.

The Memorial Bell here is rung on the anniversary of the 228 Incident each year.

A pagoda in the 228 Peace Memorial Park



**Next stop is the personal
connection we made in Taipei**

**Shiow Lin,
my 1991 neighbor
in Princeton, NJ**



As you know, a trip to another country is always so much more special when you have a personal connection

Lin Hua Tai Tea House



Established in 1883

**One of the oldest tea shops in
Taipei**

One of a kind; not a franchise

**Specialties are oolong, green, and
black teas**



**My neighbor's niece is in charge of
the tea shop now**



She gave us a tour



We bought tea

Next stop in Taipei is Liberty Square

Liberty Square

(also known as Freedom Square)

Public plaza that became the hub of events in the 1980s that helped usher Taiwan into its era of modern democracy.



**Covers 2.6 million square ft
For comparison, Tiananmen Square
is 4.8 million square feet.**

Liberty Gate



You can hear the pigeons cooing if you listen carefully in this video of the Liberty Gate, which is the main gate entering Liberty Square

**On left,
Chiang
Kai-shek
Memorial
Hall**



**Part of a grand design for a
memorial to Chiang Kai-shek, the
President of the Republic of China**



There were very few people visiting on the day we were there



Chiang Kai-shek was the leader of the Republic of China on mainland China from 1928 to 1949, when he relocated to Taiwan after his Kuomintang party was overthrown by the Communist Party.

He instituted Martial Law when he arrived in Taiwan in 1949

This began the period known as

White Terror: political repression of the Taiwanese people and the prosecution of “anti-state” activities

Although Martial Law was technically lifted in 1987, some view the White Terror period as lasting until 1992

Changing of the Guard



I read that in July of this year, the changing of the guard was moved outside instead of inside the Memorial Hall



After Chiang Kai-shek, Lee Teng-hui was president of Taiwan from 1988 - 2000 (called Mr. Democracy); oversaw transition from Martial Law and one-party rule, to a multi-party Democracy.

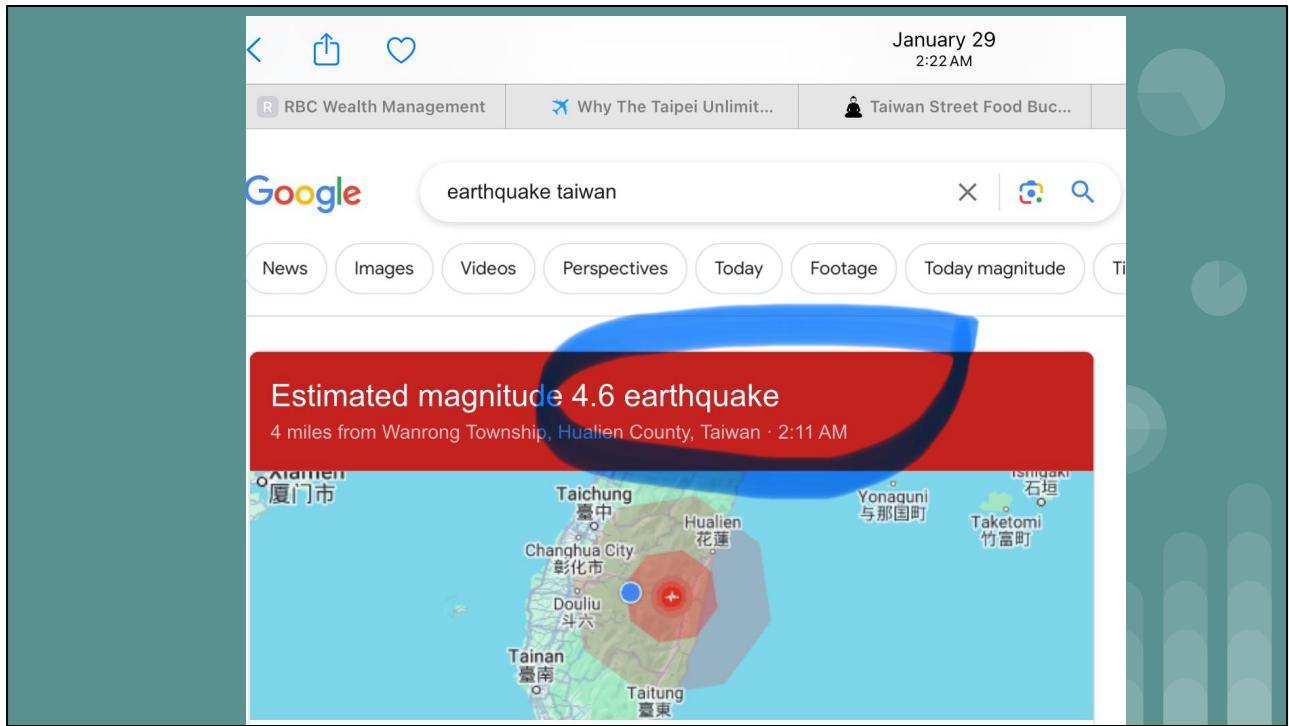
First free election was in 1996.

The National Theater



Leaving Liberty Square, we admired The National Theater building

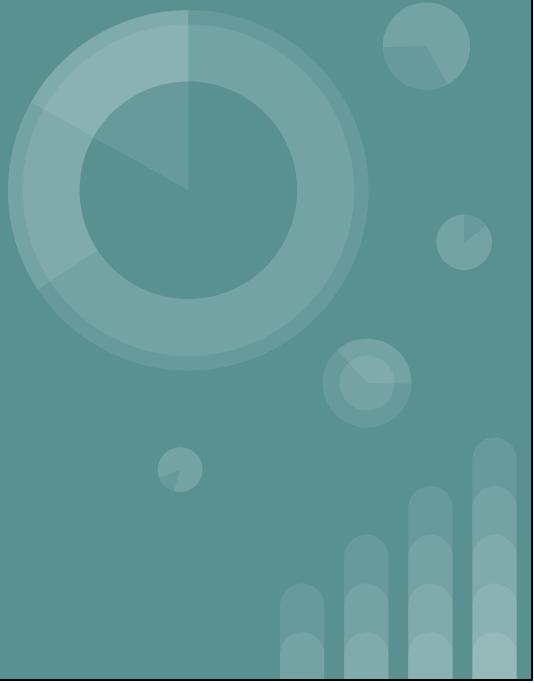
on January 29, 2024
at 02:11 am.....



Justin and Yosung were in a different hotel and did not wake up

Now.....who's hungry?

Food



One of the Night Markets



**The night markets have:
delicious street foods,
there are game stalls where you can
win prizes,
shop for affordable knick-knacks
and memorabilia, and experience
the local vibes.**



We only visited one:

“Row hu”

The street is that is almost 0.4 miles long is lined with stalls selling food, clothing and shoes

Din Tai Fung



The first Din Tai Fung restaurant was opened in Taiwan, and now restaurants are in Australia, Japan, the US (NYC), the UK, South Korea, and the UAE

Xiao long bao

小籠包 /'ʃaʊlbəŋ,baʊ/

'little basket bun'

SHOU LONG BOW

Minced pork wrapped in flour dough

“Soup” dumplings: eat it with a spoon (poke it to let the soup out)

Steamed pork dumplings



You can look through the glass window at the restaurant to watch them making the dumplings.

We waited about an hour to be seated; it's very popular



We had a lot of delicious meals.

**My son and daughter-in-law
basically visit Taiwan because the
love the food.**

**Mala:
numbingly hot,
spicy Sichuan
flavor!**



The specific type of food Justin and Yosung like is “mala”

Ma means numbing, and La means spicy



Peppercorns, chillies, and other spices

I had Dan-Dan noodles, requested to be a negative 2 on the spicy scale

So, let's go visit the National Palace Museum



The National Palace Museum

Full Disclosure: This is the only picture from the Internet.

This is a Must See destination

Collection has more than 4,000 of important masterpieces from the Tang, Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties (Qing ended in 1912)

The museum also has large

**collections of Chinese paintings,
bronzes, jade, enamelware,
carvings, embroidery, and
tapestries.**



Resting in an inside Gazebo

Spring Dawn in the Han Palace

206 BC - 220 AD

Spring Dawn in the Han Palace

**Original scroll was 12 inches by 19
feet long**



Here's the original

Note the women playing musical instruments on the left

That's a KOTO, the Chinese stringed instrument that was later introduced to Japan

Women are dancing

**But this original scroll was created
much later, during the Ming Dynasty**

**But look what the National Palace
Museum has on display.....**



This animated video brings the original scroll to life



This caught my eye, this beautifully large jade screen



**I don't remember ever seeing such
beautiful colors together**

The blues and yellows and greens



Flower pot with Indian Lotus decoration in polychrome enamels on a sky blue background

**from Ming Dynasty (1506-1521)
during Zhengde reign**

**We just gave you a taste of the
National Palace Museum, but it's**

time to move on.....

Maokong Gondola and Taipei Zoo

**We took the Mao KONG Gondola up
to the very top, and then got off at
one of the TWO Zoo stops on the
way down**



Unfortunately, the weather was overcast





I was a bit scared, thinking of that James Bond movie where the villain with the metal teeth is standing on top of the Gondola, trying to oust James Bond from the car



Panda Diplomacy is also alive and well between the PRC and the ROC

I couldn't get this one to come out from under there



And we only saw the back of this panda!!

I love hearing the little kids talking



**This is an interesting example of an
“Interspecies relationship” between
Zebra and Giraffes**

**The Zebra’s back legs are
“subluxed” which puts her at risk
for further injury if she was mounted
by a male zebra.**

So she lives happily with the

Giraffes.

Patas monkeys



Look how long the tails are of these patas monkeys (common in West Africa)

We'll leave the Zoo now and head downtown.....

Taipei 101

Skyscraper built between
1997 and 2004

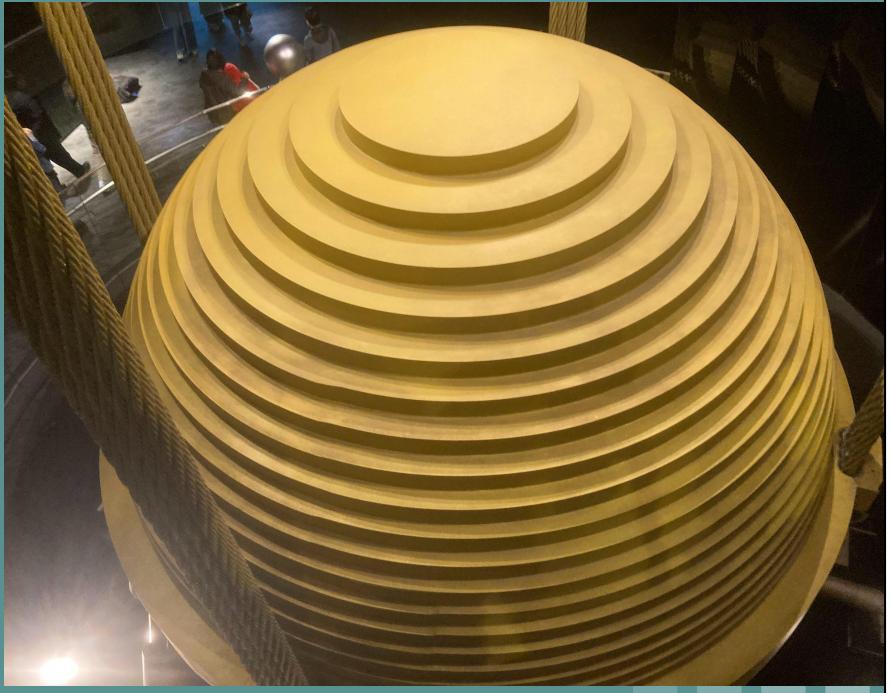


Tallest bldg in the world until Burj Khalifa was completed in 2010 in Dubai



So pretty at night being lit up

**660-ton
damper helps
keep building
stable**



Its design incorporates a number of features that enable the structure to withstand the Pacific Ring of Fire's earthquake tremors, typhoon winds, tropical storms

A 660-metric-ton steel pendulum serves as a “tuned mass damper”

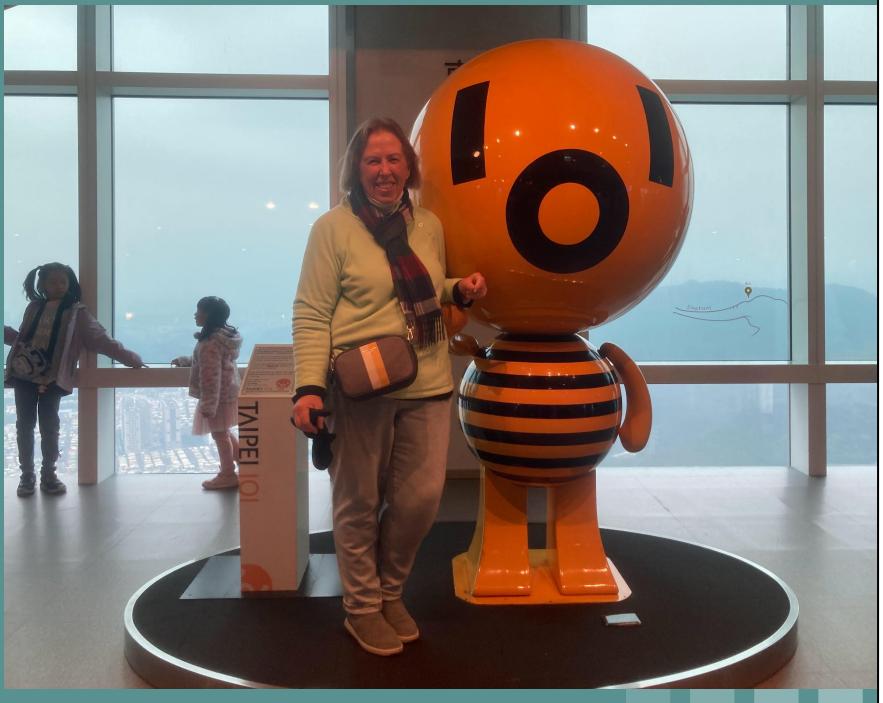
Pendulum sways to offset movements in the building



Steel plates welded together

**Solid ball extends from 88 - 92nd
floor: view it from 94th floor**

Taipei 101's
Mascot is
“Damper Baby”



Inside the Observation Deck



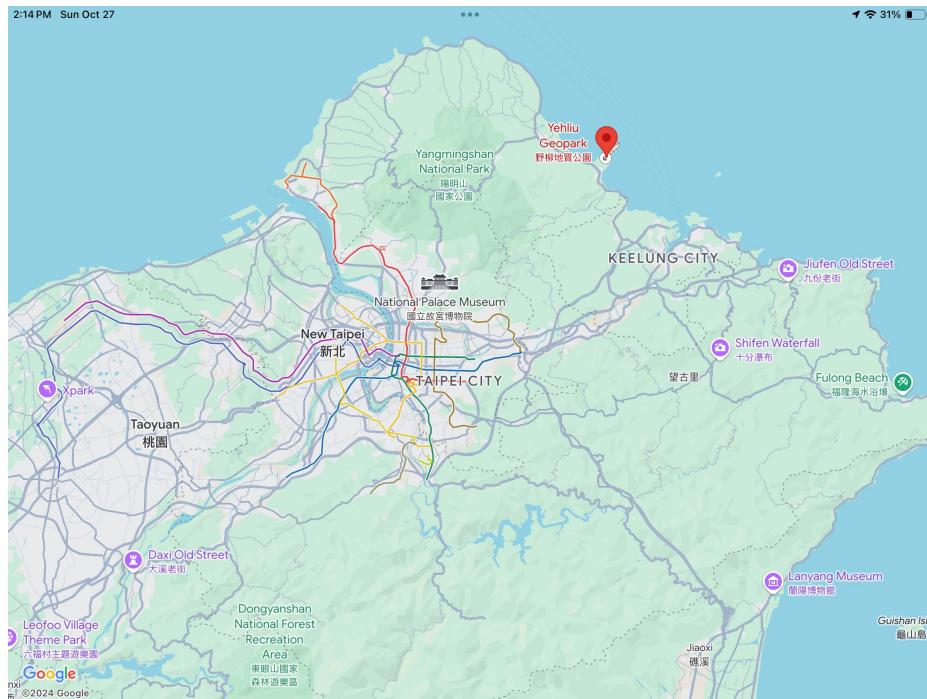






Heliport on top of this building that looks like it's tilted

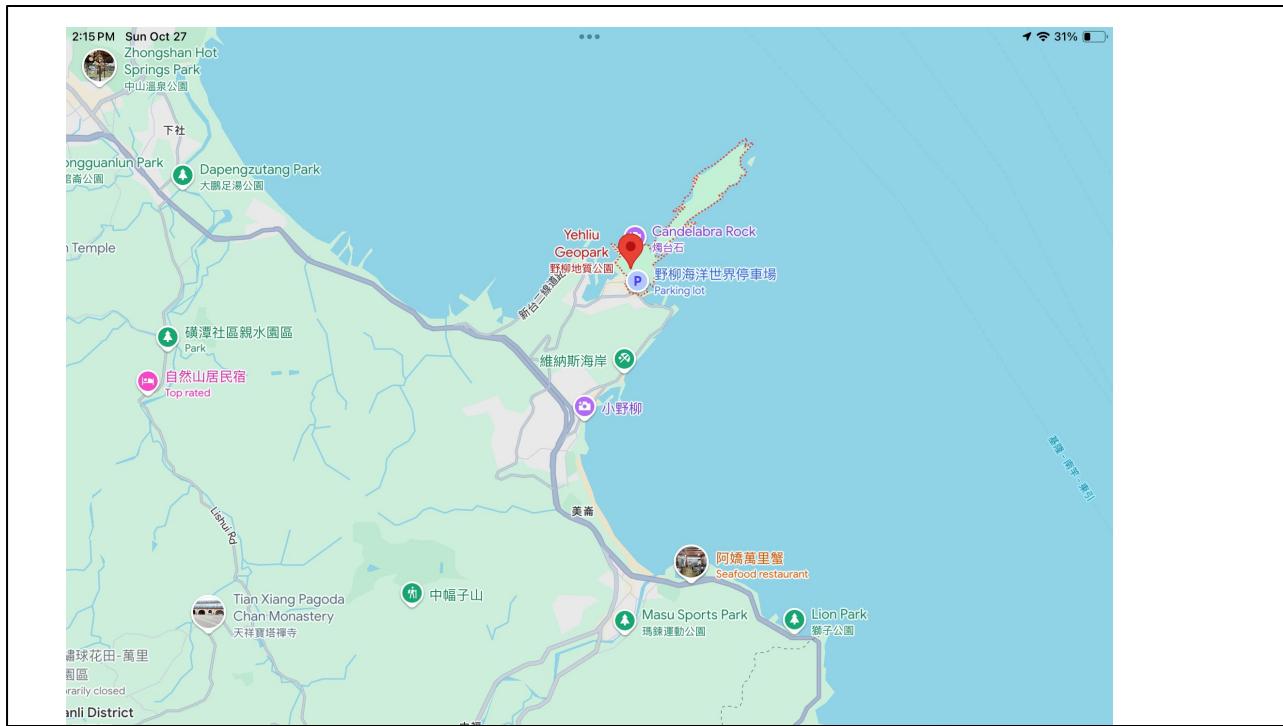
Now we'll leave Taipei and go out to the far northeast corner of the island.....



YAY LEO

We joined a bus tour of visitors from Korea to get to Yehlui

Yosung texted me translations of important things the guide was saying in Korean!



Yehlui Geopark



Yay LEO

**Home to some of the most famous
eroding rock formations in the world.**

**Because the rock layers are composed
of soft limestone, this area is prone to
erosion from a combination of water,
waves, and wind forces**



Queen's Head



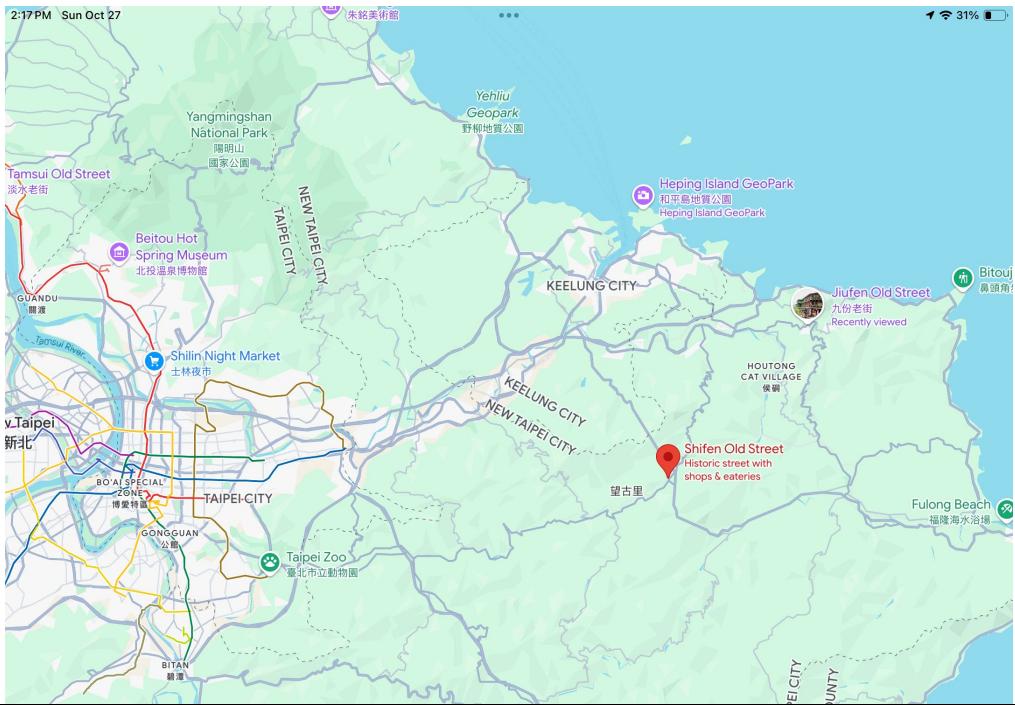
Queen's Head is the nickname of one of the eroding rock formations





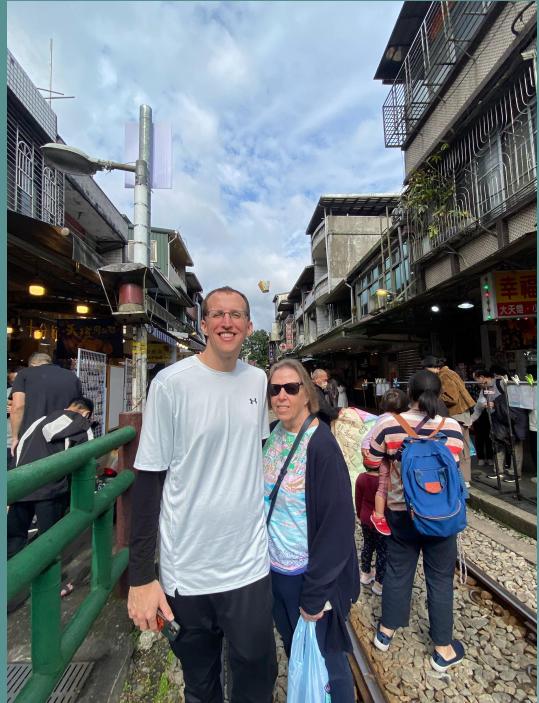
**Reminded me of the rocky coast off
Jeju Island south of the Korean
peninsula**

**Another trip we made was the town
of Sh FEN.....**



We took a local train from Yehlui Geopark to Shifen

Shifen Old Street



An old mining town originally built to transport coal by railway

You can release sky lanterns into the sky after writing Calligraphy wishes and messages to or about loved ones

An employee carefully lights a fire inside the lantern

The sky lanterns were originally used to notify the families of miners that they were OK

Release of Sky Lanterns



**Releasing the lanterns occurs right
ON the railroad track**

**When the train comes along,
everyone just moves to one side of
the street or the other**



Yosung told me that there is concern about the ecological concerns of so many of these sky lanterns being released into the sky and eventually coming down somewhere then the fire burns out





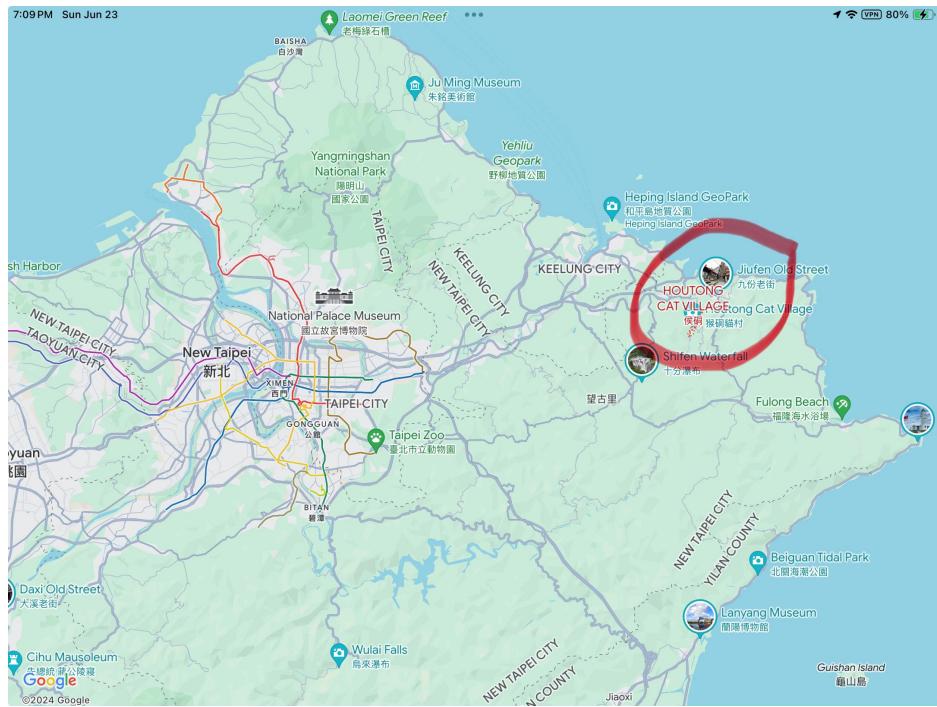


This last video from Shifen shows 2 young women taking on different poses before they release their sky lantern

Now on to our last destination.....

A surprise visit to a famous Cat Village!

HOE TONG





Known currently for its cats

Previously for its coal mining and monkeys in caves

In 2008 a local cat lover organized volunteers to start offering abandoned cats a better life: overwhelming response from other cat lovers around the nation.

Soon, Houtong became a tourist attraction, and the # of cats increased: reviving a declining

village, and transforming it into a tourist destination.

Residents care for cats



Former mining town that lost its population when coal mining stopped

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Residents care for cats







**They are friendly, they are tolerant
of people petting them**

They have nice dispositions



You can buy treats to feed them



These visitors actually brought their own cat with them to visit Houtong



What do you notice about this cat?

Some cats are spayed or neutered, and will have one of their ears clipped (as shown) – this helps to keep check on the local population of cats, and also helps identify new cats which enter into the village.

**A clipped ear marks that the cat has
been spayed or neutered**







Cashier at a Cat Cafe





Our last day in Taiwan



Then we had to take leave of Taiwan, but I loved my last view leaving Taipei, as shown in the next video



**Taiwan Airport employees waving
goodbye as our plane departs.**

Such a nice gesture.

谢谢

.... and Thank you

And that's it

Thank you so much.