

## The National Palace Museum

*Friday, March 10th*

Let's just start this way.



*We're together! We're in Taiwan! We're at the National Palace Museum!*

Thursday night was a bit of a blur, but we made it to the hotel and checked in to an impressively tiny room (the theme of hotels in Taiwan). The next day was the start of Explore Taipei! We began by taking a train and bus up to the National Palace Museum.

## The National Palace Museum

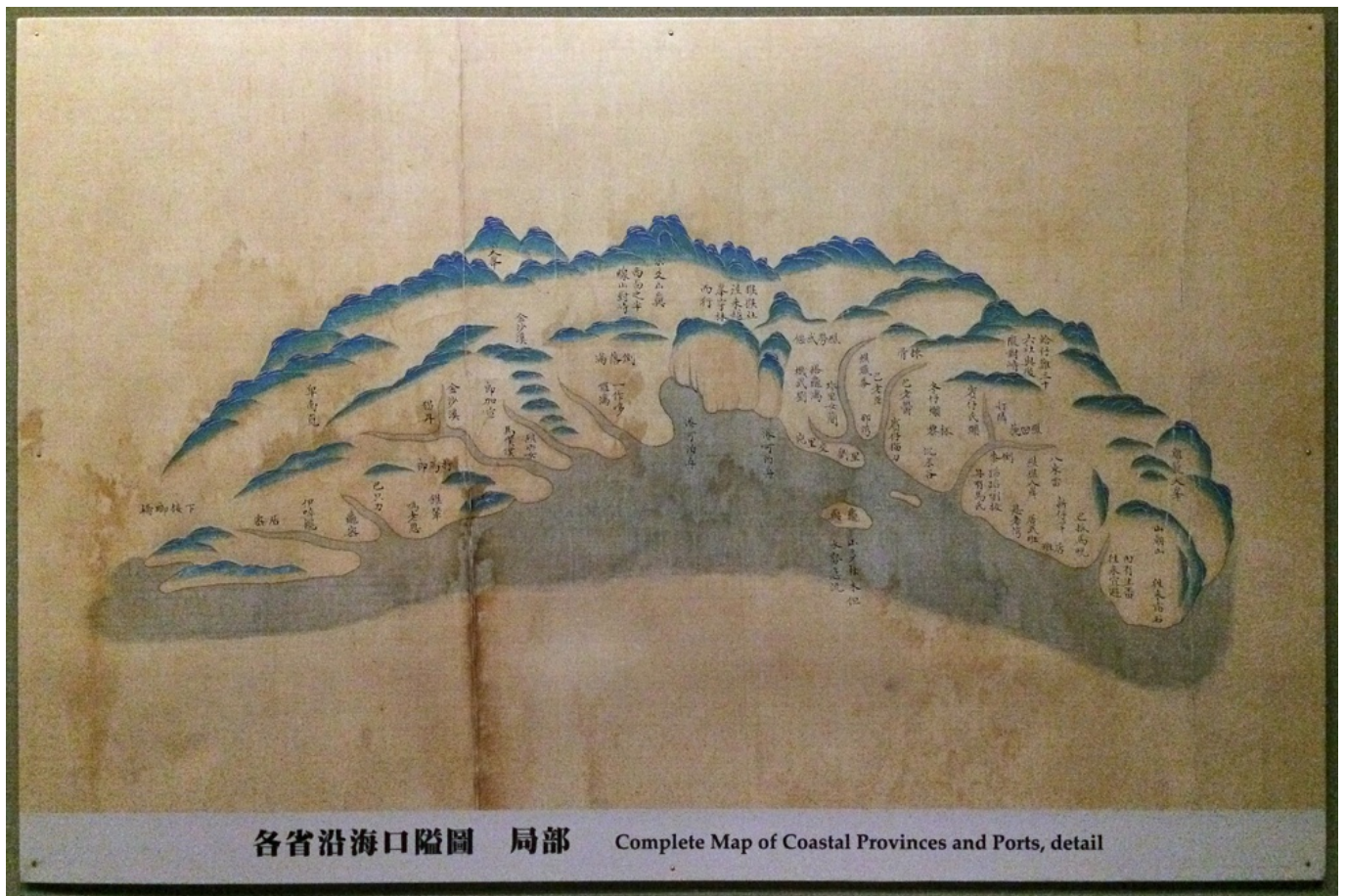
This is a collection of art and artifacts, mostly from mainland China. There's this odd situation where, because one government ran to Taiwan in 1949 and took a bunch of artifacts with them, you can see a fascinating collection of Chinese history on an island that has only been a part of China (on and off) since the 1700's.

The politics are complicated, the art is great.



*Deer Sculpture*





"Complete Map of Coastal Provinces and Ports, detail"



*What exciting exhibit causes people to line up in a crowd spanning three hallways?*





*THE FAMOUS JADE CABBAGE! It's a big deal here.*



*White Pottery guei-pitchers from the Neolithic Dawenko culture, 4300-2500 B.C.E. Because China has been making cool pottery for several thousand years.*



*"Gall-bladder-shaped vase with celadon glaze", Yuan dynasty, 14th century. I refuse to comment on the suggestion that I took this photo entirely because it represents a set of objects*



*described as gall-bladder-shaped.*



*View from the National Palace Museum. The population density is much higher than US standards.*

Just down the road is the Chiang Kai-Shek Shilin Residence, which has lovely gardens. Chiang Kai-Shek was the leader of the Nationalist government that was defeated by Mao Zedong and retreated to take over Taiwan.

It was raining a bit so hard to get many photos, except of the cheerful topiary gardens.



*Topiary Outside Chiang Kai-Shek Shilin Residence*





*I like the concept of militaristic Chiang Kai-Shek being represented by these topiary warriors.*

That evening we wandered the streets of Shilin trying to find something we could eat (we're both vegetarians, which is the first challenge, and Christy is allergic to a high percentage of food so this is always a bit of a process). Then it was off to the Shilin Night Market! The night markets in Taipei are collections of vendors who setup tents and sell everything from clothing to street food but only at night for some reason.





*Shilin Night Market – this part was enclosed and featured various video and skill games.*



*Outdoor area of the night market.*





*Christy can't easily experiment with eating; she'd been looking forward to my arrival so she could make me try all kinds of tasty (or weird) looking foods. Then she started taking pictures. Here I am with some kind of sesame roll, likely with bean curd inside, fried sweet potato ball (so good!) and mango shaved ice (Christy could, and did, share this one).*



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Day one in Taiwan: fantastic!