

# Over the city

 overthecity.asia/hiddentaiwan/2015/1/24/losheng-sanitorium

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An old dental surgery in the abandoned part of Losheng

(Update 2020: The government has recognized how unique this site is and has erected

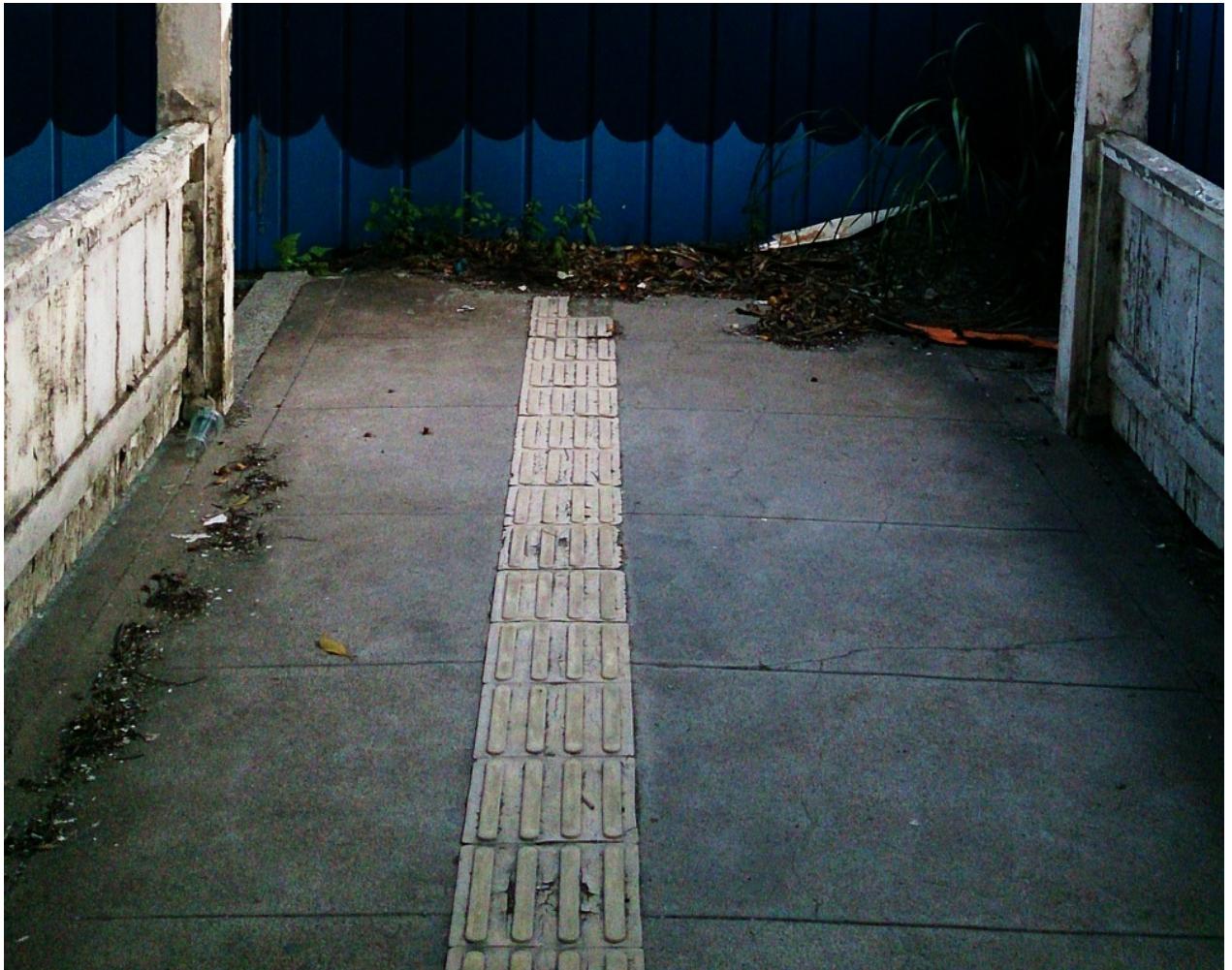
protective sheds over many buildings. It looks as though the site will be restored. As for access, the situation is likely always changing but go with a friendly attitude towards security and they may let you take a look.) One warm January afternoon I headed out to the Losheng Sanatorium on the edge of New Taipei city with a couple of friends. Before visiting I had read about the sanatorium's battles with the Taipei Department of Rapid Transit, but I knew little else.

## a little history

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Losheng, which translates as happy life, was built in the 1929 by the Japanese. At the time Hansen's disease, commonly known as leprosy, was considered highly contagious and Losheng was built to house Taiwan's sufferers. It was, and in many ways still is, a totally self sufficient community, equipped with a temple, a church, its own hospital, vegetable gardens, communal laundries, and a lot else besides. In 1954 a new way to treat leprosy was discovered and the inhabitants were allowed to leave. However for many it had become a home and unable to adapt to what had been, and perhaps still was, a hostile society outside many elected to stay.





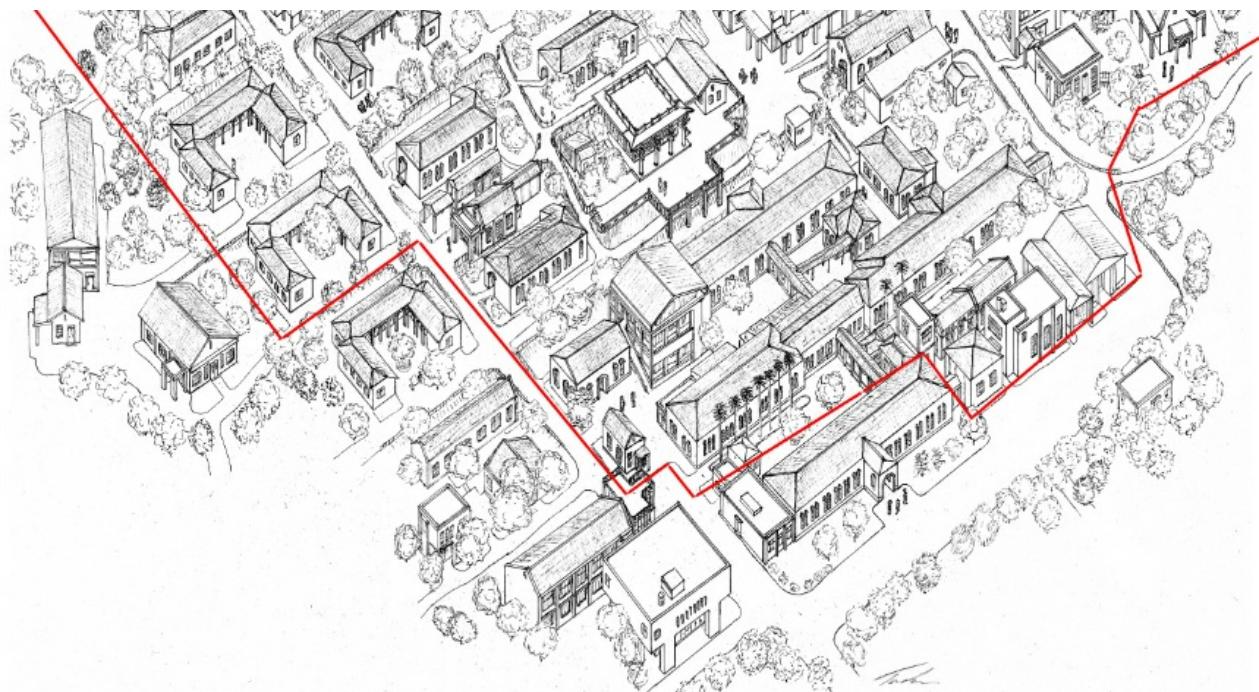
The passageway to the demolished administration building.

In the 90's the Department of Rapid Transit (DORT), decided it needed the sanatorium site for an MRT depot. This pushed the future of the sanatorium into the limbo it currently is in. A replacement building and hospital was provided (the large structure near the sanatorium bridge). However it was unpopular with residents. They felt the sense of community and collective memories would be destroyed as well as the tranquility. The MRT construction comes right up to the sanatorium and has destroyed a few buildings. It's also clear a couple of buildings have shifted down the valley a little from subsidence, and are twisted. It seems an alternative to destroying the whole sanatorium was proposed and currently there's a stalemate between the two sides.

## the site

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In late 2016 I finally found enough photos of the destroyed buildings to finish this map. There's still a few educated guesses with it but I think it's quite accurate. Everything beneath the red line has been lost to the MRT.



Dormitory

I was up for visiting the place just for its interesting history. I didn't expect parts of the site to have been untouched for more than a decade, and to be totally fascinating. Losheng is well known now but back in 2015 there had been few visitors. From Huilong station we proceeded to get kinda lost finding the bridge to the place (at one point wandering the dark hallways of the new hospital). There is a medium sized temple near Huilong MRT, from possibly the 30's, which is worth a look before you cross to Losheng.



## Huilong Temple

There is one entrance to Losheng going across a long pedestrian bridge over the vast MRT construction site. Walk from Huilong MRT to the new Losheng hospital. Walk up the right side through the parking lot and past a white church. The bridge is just past here. The scale of the MRT construction is enormous. A huge part of the hill the sanatorium is on has been leveled, leaving a 10 floor drop right in front it.

The sanatorium is quite large, and parts of it are still inhabited by the residents who haven't left. The people are friendly and even security were pretty sweet. The site became very popular from about 2017 onward and I heard reports of security turning people away. By now I think popularity has waned a little so it should be ok to visit. We started with the left side of the site and worked up and across, then down to the hospital area. If you don't have much time then the hospital is the most interesting part.

The first buildings we came to were small dormitories based on the three-side courtyard traditional Taiwanese homes. These were quite dilapidated, though we saw some repairs were being carried out. All of the buildings on the lower part of the site have been shored up with pilings to prevent damage from the slope moving. The MRT has stated that such movement is a fiction. However it's quite obvious the buildings are moving. The first house has twisted and has huge cracks running through it.





Large crack in one of the dormitories

These buildings were untouched for decades and were full of old furniture and belongings. There was a small library and some ancient looking bathroom facilities (no bathroom on site seems to have been upgraded since the 50's). Every object gave another part of someone's story making it way more engrossing and alive than a museum.

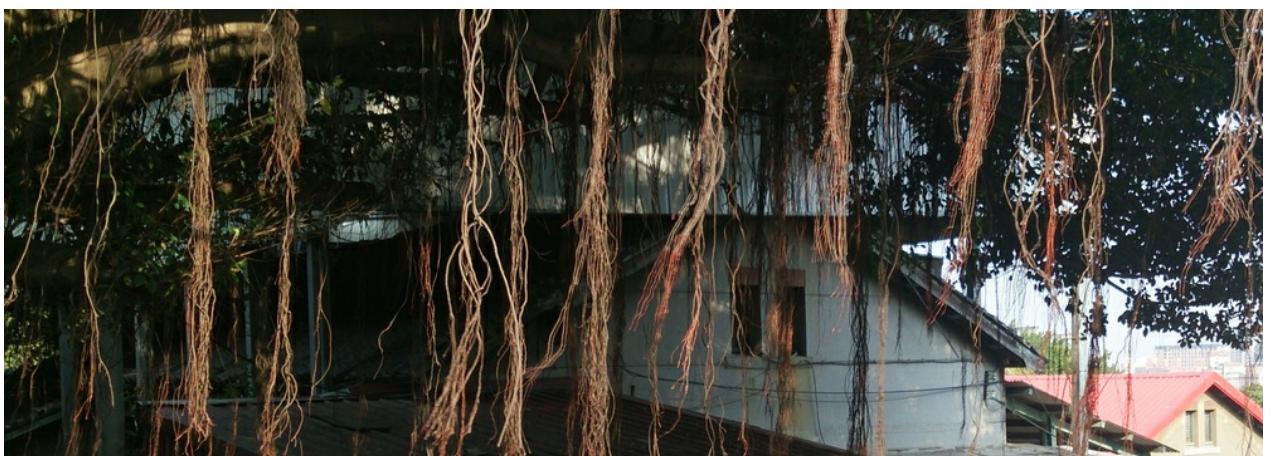




There's a narrow brick building here which was the community shop and a few small stone buildings with arched windows. These seem to act as community halls and more residents' housing. There didn't seem to be many people around, either the community is quite empty or it was afternoon nap time.



Former grocery store



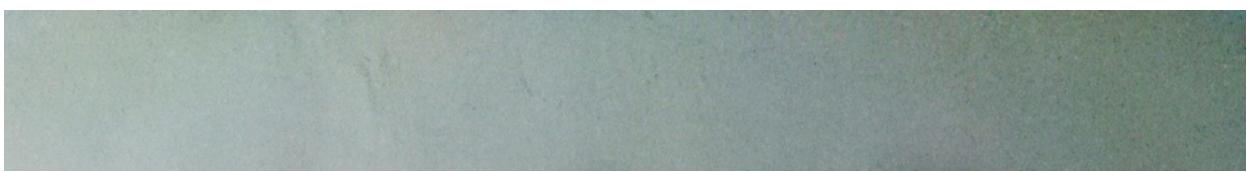


Partially collapsed warehouse

We passed a couple of other residential buildings then a large well kept temple. Next to this was a machinery building and a warehouse, both of which were inaccessible. Down the street past this was the current clinic building which though a little run down is still used. Next to this, and from the same era, are a couple of large abandoned 1960's style hospital buildings.



They each have large wards inside and have clearly been abandoned for a long time. What surprised us about the buildings in Losheng was how many personal belongings and how much equipment and machinery was left. It was almost like people left in a big hurry. Perhaps they were evicted. The longer modern ward building was quite dark and creepy with bathrooms straight out of a Silent Hill videogame. We even found a snake skeleton and some bizarre installation over one of the urinals.







Some strange thing over just this urinal

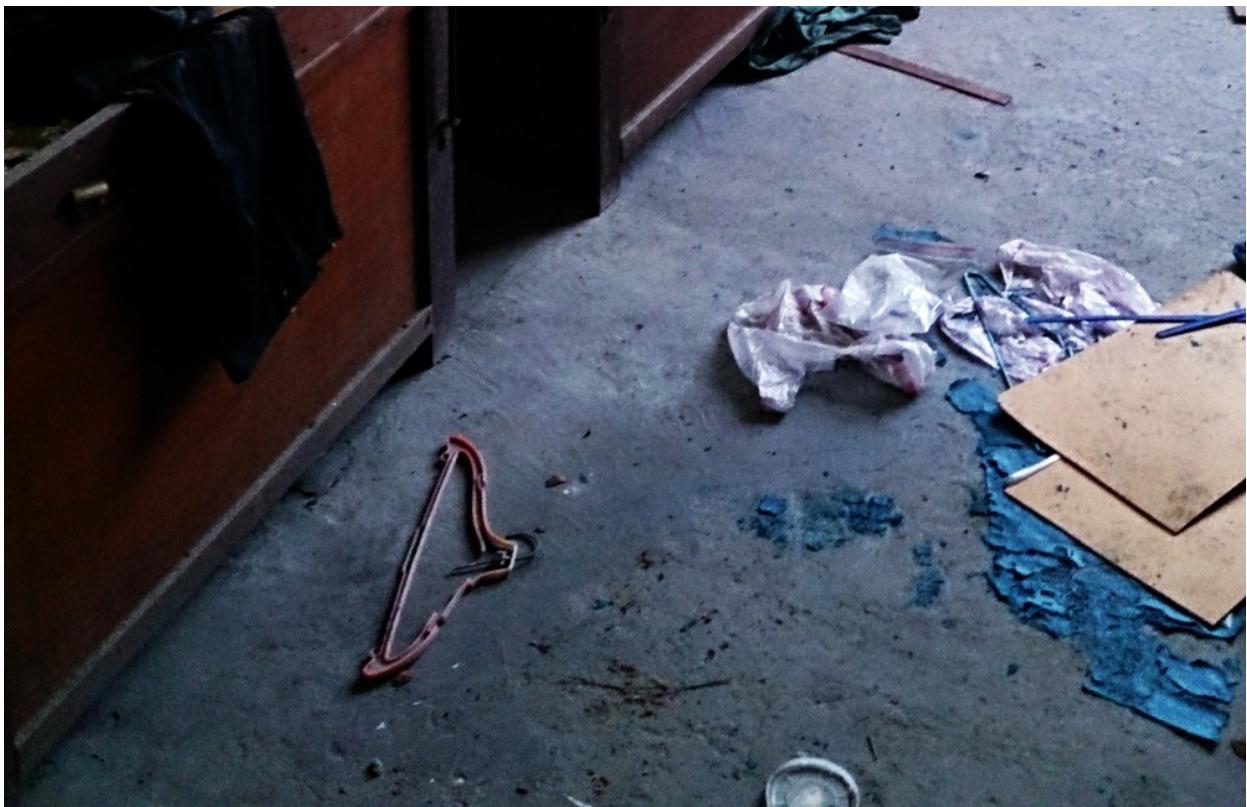




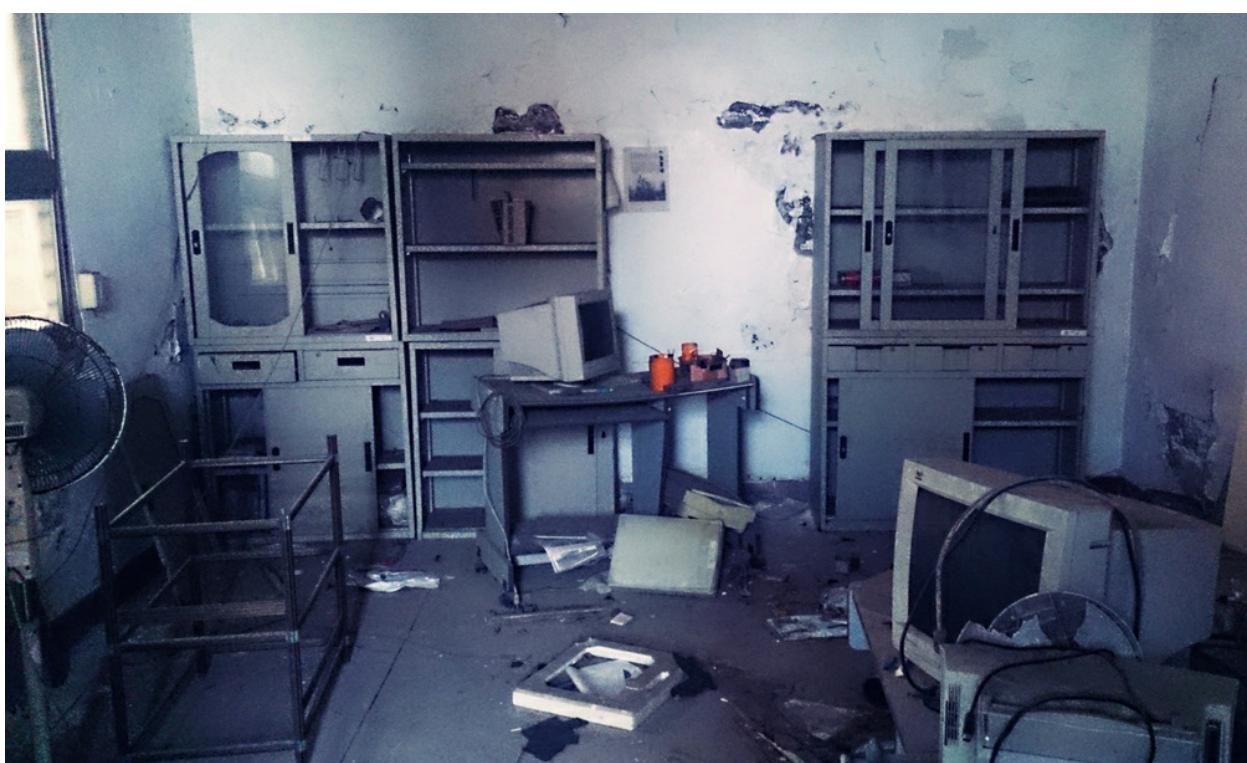
I would love to know what this is. It looks like a barnacle.

There's a certain atmosphere that hangs over these wards and the historic hospital buildings next door that makes you wonder what went on here. Especially during the early days.





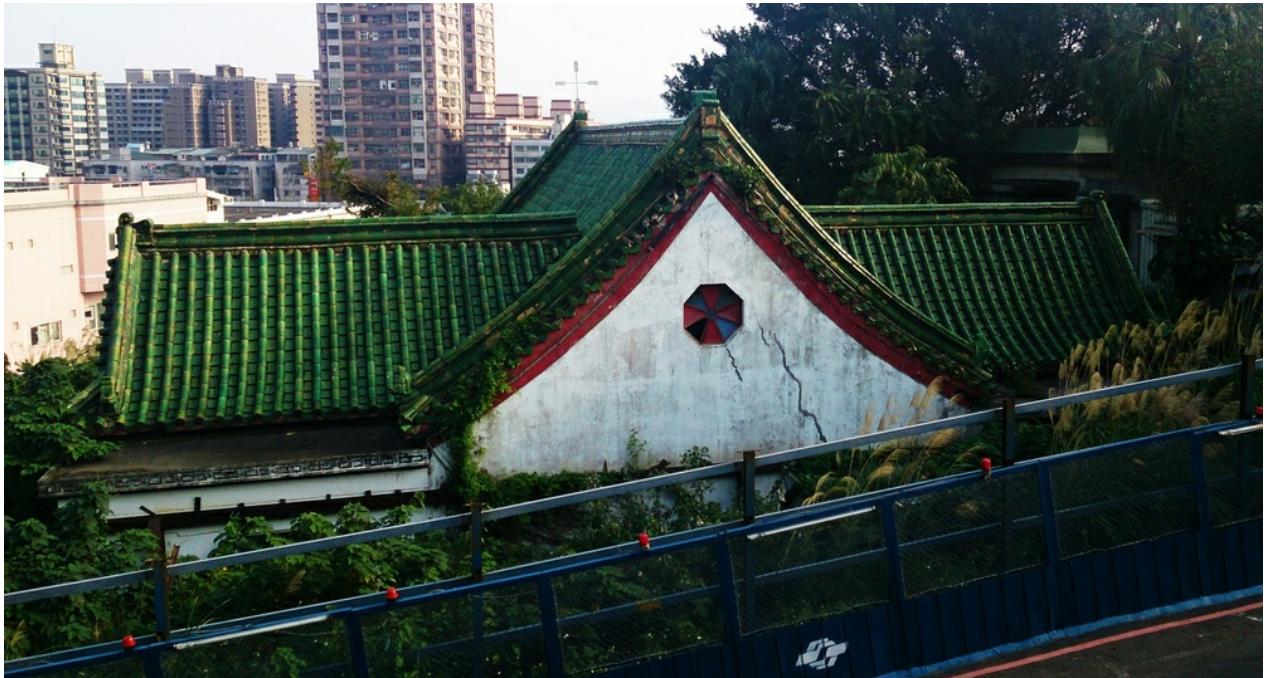
Medicine and belongings in the ward building.

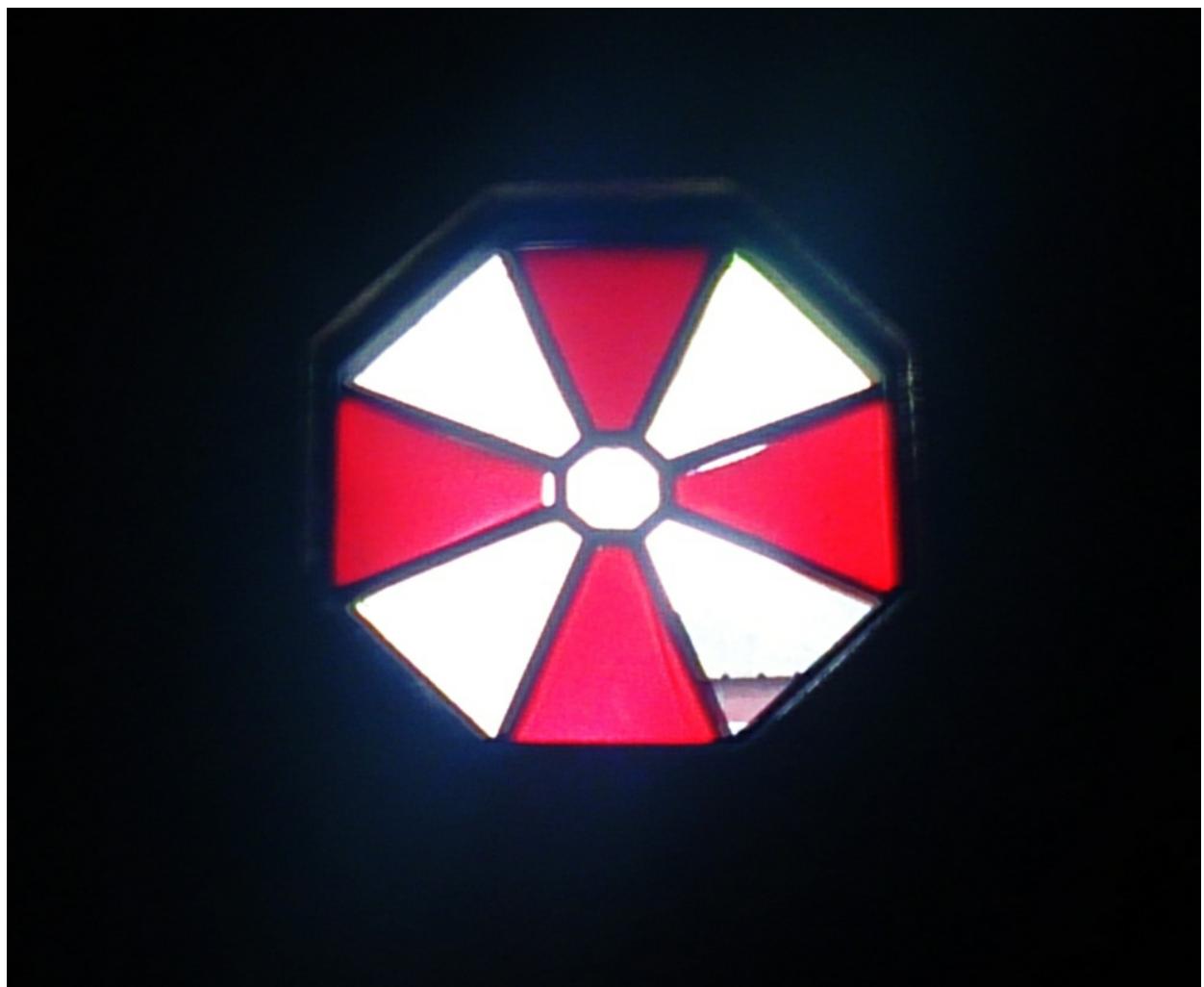




At the southern end of the long ward there is a small, largely empty building. Go through this and down some steps to a green roofed building - the sanatorium church. This was one of my favorite buildings, I felt I was the first to open those doors in a long

time. Vegetation has grown up all around it and paint peels from the ceiling. The church has a strange retro-future design inside, quite different from the Chinese style exterior. Above the altar is a small window. The stained glass is a dead ringer for Umbrella Corporation's logo. A bookcase of yellowed bibles sits by the door. It's an unusual space. Not quite beautiful. There's something about it I can't put my finger on.





Back out and onto the road we hopped over the fence into the main hospital building. You can actually just walk down an open ramp into this place but we didn't see that. We entered the first building, which turned out to be the morgue. That really set the tone

Entered the first building, which turned out to be the morgue. That's why set aside here for the rest of the old hospital.







### The morgue and long corridors

The hospital buildings are large and there are many rooms that are still fully equipped. These include a dentist surgery and an operating theater. There are medical records lying around and even medicine and blood samples. As of 2020 I expect some of these rooms have been emptied

I won't give everything in this building away as there's a lot of cool stuff to be discovered, but I will mention the two pickled brains in jars, which are hands down the weirdest and most unsettling things I've found exploring anywhere. Who abandons brains and why? I did have a photo of the brains below but took it off after a fellow blogger got trawled through Taiwan's gutter press for documenting abandoned urns left in a forgotten temple.

There are several smaller buildings around the main ones which are just as interesting. Some are right next to the MRT construction's cliff and I wonder if they may fall in one day. Another large, modern ward sits next to the 1930's buildings and still has equipment under a thick layer of dust.







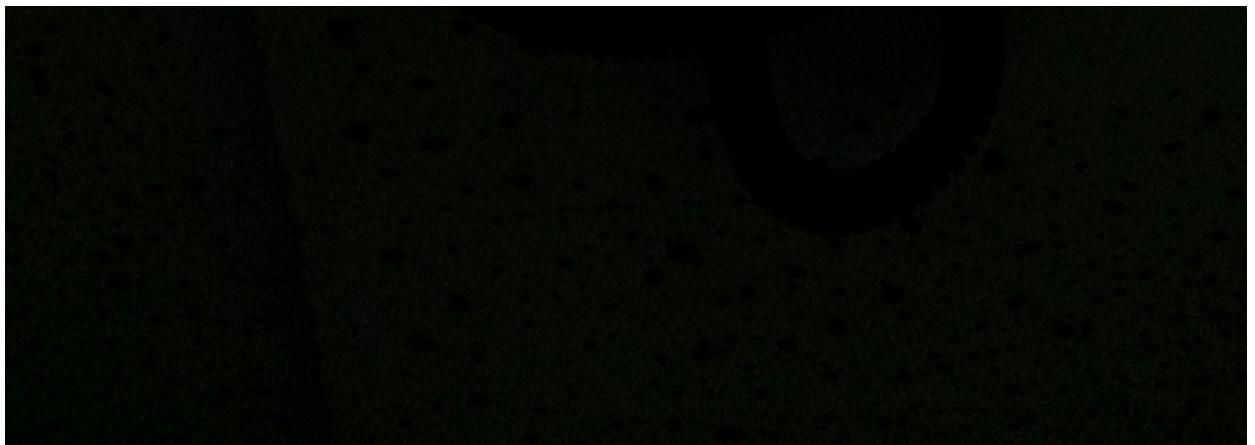
Muted lighting in long abandoned wards

What I thought was going to be a small site with an interesting story turned out to be so much more than I expected. I regret not having spoken to some of the residents a bit more, but there weren't many around. I wondered about giving the location of this place away. The site is pretty untouched and it would be a shame for it to be damaged. However my feeling is the sort of people who would do that are not the sort of people who are going to be reading this blog, and the site is guarded by security. This place has a ~~special history~~ and its residents could do with some awareness of their troubles with

a special history, and its residents could do with some awareness of their troubles with the MRT. So really I think it's a good idea for anyone reading this to visit, explore, and learn about this quite unique place.







I was quite taken with Losheng and wanted to document the site in my own way. I decided to make the map you can see further up in this post and to draw the lost parts of the site. I hope if the rest of the site is lost it'll make a good record of it. And I hope even more that the people fighting for Losheng can use it for exhibits and I can get the place some attention through my fb page.

Despite help from some friends I couldn't find anything near enough good photos to finish it and so it was stalled for about a year. Fortunately in Sept 2016 I stumbled on a clear-ish aerial photo by chance while scrolling through Facebook. Using this and a few ground photos (some very low resolution), I could work out the rest of the site. All apart from the library really which I've had to mostly hide behind trees.

For some more cool places either check other blog posts or take a look on the Hidden Taiwan Map [here](#). If you Google Losheng Sanatorium you'll find a number of press articles mentioning the MRT troubles. The adventures that make up these entries are often posted as Instagram stories at [tomrookart](#) first. So give that a follow too if you like as it can sometimes be a year or more before stuff turns up here! I keep this project free of intrusive ads but it does take up a fair bit of time. If you would like to support it please either buy some of my work [here](#) (use code hiddentaiwan for a discount). Or book through this link at [My Taiwan Tour](#), who cover a huge range of places and experiences in Taiwan.