

Taiwanese in Australia protest 'laborer' label

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Taiwanese on working holidays in Australia voiced their anger yesterday at people who describe them as "Taiwanese laborers."

The issue drew widespread attention in Taiwan after the Chinese-language magazine Business Today published an article about an economics graduate from National Tsing Hua University who was working in a slaughterhouse in Australia as part of his working holiday program.

The 27-year-old, who was being paid A\$19 (NT\$590) an hour, said that the purpose of his trip to Australia was to make money so he could bring home at least NT\$1 million and pay off his NT\$300,000 student loan.

In response to the story, some people warned that Taiwan is becoming a labor-exporting nation with increasing numbers of young people leaving low-paying Taiwan to work as laborers in higher-paying countries with working holiday programs, such as Australia.

However, Wu Yi-ting, who worked in Australia for 18 months as part of the program, said that working holidaymakers are only working to earn the money they need to travel and should not be called "Taiwanese laborers."

Although he made a total of A\$30,000 during his stay in the country and managed to bring back NT\$400,000 to Taiwan, Wu said he had heard of people who ended their holidays after just a couple of months because they failed to find a job or adapt to life in Australia.

Chen Yi-yuan, who spent six months in Australia with his girlfriend, said there are not many working holidaymakers who can make NT\$1 million a year unless they are willing to work long hours and are lucky enough to keep their jobs.

Chen said he and his girlfriend managed to earn A\$14,000 — the result of packaging more than 5 million mangoes and sleeping in a delapidated bunkhouse.

However, both Wu and Chen said that as long as there is steady income, it is easier to save money in Australia than in Taiwan, where the starting salary for college graduates is NT\$22,000.

Questions

1. Do you know anything about working holiday?
2. How's your opinion on working holiday? It's good or bad? Why?
3. Except for making money, is any other reason that many young people going abroad for working holiday?
4. As it become more and more popular among young people, what advantage and disadvantage dose working holiday brings?
5. What is the most important thing that you worry about working holiday?+
6. If you have chance to work holiday, which country would you like to work in?
7. If you want to go to working holiday, do your parents agree? Why or why not?
8. Do you agree that Taiwanese who work oversea should be called "Taiwanese laborers"? Why or why not?
9. What changes are expected to happen on people who get back from overseas after a period of working holidaymakers?
10. Do you think that Taiwanese go to work abroad will be discriminated against? Why or why not?