

## Chinese tourists ruining tourism

Written by Hsu Yu-fang 許育芳

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The Tourism Bureau on Friday announced that the number of Chinese tourists allowed into Taiwan is to be increased from 5,000 to 8,000 before the end of February next year. The decision is certain to add to the deteriorating quality of tourism in Taiwan.

Taiwanese are a friendly people, so the more foreign visitors the better. The problem is that since Taiwan was opened up to Chinese tourism, the environment at Taiwan's tourist spots has suffered from varying levels of destruction, causing the quality of tourism to drop and scaring away "good" tourists from many other countries, Japan in particular.

It has also made Taiwanese fear domestic tourism, and they would now rather spend money on travel abroad instead of spending their money in Taiwan. Frankly speaking, bad money drives out good money, and this situation will not necessarily bring more profits to Taiwan's tourism industry.

A friend of mine who runs a travel agency in Hualien said that the spending power of Japanese tourists is far higher than that of Chinese tourists, and that although there are more Chinese, they are scaring the Japanese away, causing revenue for travel agencies to drop.

In the end, many travel agencies simply stop accepting Chinese tour groups in order to drive revenue back up again. Businesses in the Chinlun Hot Springs (日月潭) area of Taitung County are making the same decision, refusing to accept Chinese tour groups, which has caused their revenue to increase by more than 20 percent.

The huge influx of Chinese tourists has not only resulted in a lower-quality experience for tourists, but the lives of local residents have also been affected.

Due to National Dong Hwa University's picturesque setting, a sizeable number of Chinese tour groups stay at bed and breakfast establishments nearby, resulting in a significant amount of tour buses shuttling back and forth on the narrow village roads every day. This has created a real traffic hazard for local residents and students at the school.

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In addition, Chinese tourists are big smokers, and they generally discard their cigarette stubs on the ground, which is also causing a lot of anger among residents.

Last week, I required students in my news production class to submit a report. Without having agreed upon it, some students discussed the effect that the influx of Chinese tourists is having on student life.

Today, the government suddenly announced that the number of Chinese tourists that is to be allowed into Taiwan is to increase by 3,000 per day between now and the end of February, and this is causing worries that the impact of Chinese tourism will also increase.

Is it really right to implement a policy that only looks to quantity and ignores quality?

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Translated by Perry Svensson

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