

ASIAN WORKERS NEWS

NO. 205 아시안 워커스 뉴스

MARCH 26, 2006

105,000 new migrant workers in this year

This year 105,000 migrant workers will be introduced into Korea from 10 different countries.

The government held a Foreign Workforce Policy Committee meeting on March 14, and decided to select 10 different countries for workforce exportation, which will send 105,000 migrant workers, 11,000 less than last year.

The number of migrant workers to enter Korea this year was decided in consideration of the 48,000 person workforce shortage in domestic companies, and the 57,000 migrant workers leaving Korea because of expiration of their permitted period of stay, voluntarily or forcedly. The new migrant workforce consists of 73,000 migrant workers (35,000 migrants and 38,000 overseas Korean residents) through the Employment Permit System (EPS) and 32,000 Industrial Trainees.

The size of the migrant workforce was determined according to the national labour market situation, the workforce supply and demand situation by industry, and the possibility for substituting local labour.

At the same time, it was considered by race conflicts, cultural & religious confrontations and settlement, within 2 percent of the local Korean workers.

As EPS has been swiftly settled, from 2007 the Industrial Trainee System will be absorbed into EPS, and the necessary amount of migrant workers will be supplied principally through EPS. Industrial trainees will only be introduced this year according to the number of departed migrant workers.

The areas of business in which migrant workers will work are aquaculture, automobile repairs, collecting and selling recycled materials, and public bathes, where there has always been a shortage of local workers.

The Ministry of Labour plans to announce a demand and supply plan for a migrant workforce some time this month. The list of exporting countries was decided as a result of the Migrant Workforce Policy Committee determining that every two years they would appraise and re-select exporting countries.

The decision was taken based on results of a questionnaire given to enterprisers who hired migrant workers, specialists and the general public, as well as enterprisers' preferences, transparency in the export process, migrant workers' runaway rates from allocated workplaces, and migrant worker's return guarantee possibility. Diplomatic & economic influences were also measuring indexes for deciding exporting countries.

In order to unify migrant workforce systems without failure by abolishing the Industrial Trainee System in 2007, a total of twelve countries, six through the EPS (the Philippines, Mongolia, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Vietnam), and six who have consistently provided a workforce without exporting irrationality or delay (China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Cambodia and East Timor) were considered as exporting countries for 2006 and 2007. Seven countries, including five existing export countries – Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Mongolia and Sri Lanka – and two new countries – Uzbekistan and Pakistan – were finally decided as labour sending countries. Indonesia, China and Cambodia were also included, but MOL is still in negotiations with their governments in regard to their labour sending procedures.

Since Kyrgyzstan and East Timor do not have any infrastructure for sending workforces, MOL will decide whether it will include them in the labor sending country category after considering their implementation if such infrastructures.

MOL starts its negotiations to establish a MOU with the relevant countries later this month and plans having this done by late June.

<Yonhap News> March 15, 2006 **AWN**

EXCHANGE RATES

Date : March 23, 2006

US Dollar is ;

Country	Currency	Rate
Korea	Won	973
Philippines	Peso	51.05
Thailand	Bhat	39.00
Indonesia	Rupiah	9087
Sri Lanka	Rupee	102.50
India	Rupee	45.00
Bangladesh	Taka	67.72
Pakistan	Rupee	60.02
Nepal	Rupee	71.25
Russia	Rouble	27.73
Burma	Kyat	1,120
Vietnam	Dong	15,915
China	Yuan	8.03
Nigeria	Naira	127.60
Ghana	Cedi	9,070
Mongolia	Tugulik	991.45

Turkish worker Leaps From 6th Floor of Immigration

A Turkish man, Coscun, who was in the custody of Suwon Immigration Office, leapt from the 6th floor of the Immigration Processing Centre, breaking a skylight and window. Coscun was taken to hospital but died three hours later. Details of his autopsy are yet to be realized.

Coscun entered Korea with a three month stay visa in 2004, but stayed on as an undocumented worker.

After Mr. Coscun's death, 40 Labor Human Rights committees backed a 'Compulsive control impediment and Coscun Selim's death investigation cooperation countermeasure'. The human rights committees describe Mr. Coscun's death as a, "Result of the Korean Government's inhuman foreign worker crackdown and deportation summons", and is urging to discontinue the policy immediately.



Voice of FWR

Daechuri farmers protest forced relocation

By Kim Min-jung, Secretary general of FWR

It's almost like a war situation in Daechuri, Pyeongtaek city in Gyeonggi Province because the Korean government, after confirming the plan to move the U.S. army base in Yongsan and Dongducheon to the city, showed its force with excavators and bulldozers to drive its citizens away.

Against the forced execution, Daechuri residents and human rights activists have thrown their whole bodies not to lose their farms and residences where they have lived so far. A few days ago, around 40 activists and residents were captured by the police and two of them were restricted during opposition.

This is not the first time that the residents are facing forced migration. They were kicked out from their hometown due to the expansion of the U.S. army base without any compensation in 1952 and they built their nests in present Daechuri.

Although the town and the land were very poor, the residents have lived and farmed there for several years. However, their simple hope of just living in their land peacefully was sacred from public power cruelly. At last, residents in their 60s and 70s lay down in front of the excavators and bulldozers.

We have learned lots of things from migrant workers.

'Migration' means not only 'transfer' of residence. Migration, adjustment in a strange country, and resettlement are really not easy things.

How huge violent forced deportation is, and taking away one's living town! It is not only for the rights of residence and living, but also relationship and adjustment as human beings. It will not be an exception for Korean migrants even in Korea.

Human rights activists are crying that life land in Daechuri should not be used for the U.S. army's war base. To protect Daechuri is what we should do to protect farmers' lives and keep world peace. Moreover, it's really incomprehensible that the government makes national civilians move to another place



forcibly for a foreign army.

However, Daechuri farmers still make a big cry with their simple hope,

"Let's do farming this year as usual!" **AWN**

Day Breaking

Blood shared solidarity

By Hong Seung-yi

Leader of the Ilter (Troupe for Labor Culture Art)

I had a traffic accident caused by a drunken driver upon returning from the rail strike eve.

The next day I went to the local headquarters of the Korea Railway in Youngju and had a performance at the Democracy Park with comrades of the local headquarters in Busan. After the series of events, I got exhausted and laid down myself the next day and found out that the strike was over.

As if it was decided by the leaders of my own labour union, we regretted the result with tears and our discussion went on.

Finally, we checked into the hospital to get proper treatment. After some admission procedure, I had light sleep which was just like a night at a strange inn.

When I woke up, they brought me breakfast. It was a newly opened hospital and I knew this kindness came from the fact that we were traffic accident patients who had insurance coverage. They were all nice to us.

Stepping up to the roof. I could feel the wind and the chilly blow made me freshen up. I didn't know where the relaxation came from. I sincerely read a book and found it interesting and sleep took over me naturally.

I was taken care of and protected by someone and these made me rest.

My mother hit my back and said, "What the heck do you think you are?" I don't regard myself as a salvation. Who can rescue whom?

'Mom, you are right.'

A huge order moved by capitalism and sell everything as product made me contact migrant workers.

They are separated from their homeland, family and even sold.

I also obtained biased education on ethnicity and I saw marching migrant workers at the May day convention. On the red banner they held, it said 'Ban forceful deportation.' Though they had darker skin, I remembered they also had hot red blood in their blood vessels. I waited at the pedestrian crossing right in front of the marching group and asked to myself, 'Am I labor worker? Who is a worker?'

The subway train is packed with unemployed citizens during the day and half of the workers are irregular workers. Who is a worker then?

As members of the Ilter (troupe for Labor Culture Art), we meet every labor class and bring our stories onto the stage to share them. We all wish the story trim up and reflect our life beautifully.

A beautiful concert for equality and peace for neglected people in society.

We intend to hold event for migrant workers and irregular workers but it has been still in the air for four years.

Alram from Bangladesh, with whom we had a concert two years ago, got arrested and deported to his motherland.

And a member of Stop Crackdown band, played the electric guitar when they had a concert last year. His Korean wife, carried a baby who was less than 100 days old on her back and cheered enthusiastically at the concert.

The baby's face was like spring sunshine to me.

I assume the couple, sharing the baby with love and blood, might have promised a peaceful future like his voice and the warm breast of his wife.

Perhaps the shared solidarity was hope.

They were one from the beginning. **AWN**

Freedom is undocumented

By Lee Mi-Ran, FWR chief counsellor

I have recently had many counselling sessions, mostly about retirement pay. Almost all of the workers I see came to Korea as trainees, and after working a year as trainees and two years as trainee workers, many employers don't give retirement pay to workers when their contracts end.

There are two big issues in regard to this.

Firstly, it doesn't make sense if workers have remaining contract time to not pay them. Secondly, many workers become undocumented after their contract ends. Legally documented workers can go back home with retirement pay through petition to MOL, and so on. However, this is difficult for undocumented workers.

Many Pakistani workers had not received pay for two months before their contracts ended. The reason was employers thinking workers' would possibly stay in Korea as undocumented after their contracts finished. Employers insisted that they would give the workers their pay at the airport. And employers had confiscated passports and ID cards. Nevertheless, the workers couldn't afford to go back to Pakistan, so they became undocumented.

It was not the first time I had dealt with this problem, so I knew what it would be like to request workers' retirement pay.

In the end, the workers ran away, so the employer couldn't pay them, and the company was penalised because of workers' undocumented status. This is why employers may say that they will make retirement payments, but force workers to go back to their homelands.

Because workers aren't in a stable situation just before repatriation, workers come to me again and again for help and with the knowledge they will be safe.

I ask myself why they had to be undocumented, even though they missed their families and might face many problems in Korea. The answer is obvious. They had to go into much debt to come to Korea, and because they didn't earn much money in the three years they were here, they said that they wanted to stay and earn more. Besides, if they go back to home, they can't come back to Korea. They just want to earn as much possible, not to harm Korea.

After finishing their three year contracts, migrant workers have a dilemma. Should they go home or stay? If they want to stay, they have to become undocumented. Korea uses migrant workers as the need arises, and it doesn't care about workers' needs and rights. In such a situation, workers have to become undocumented if they really want some kind of freedom, the basic right of all humans. **AWN**

Where are my forehead bones?

By Seon-kyong, FWR counsellor

Where are my forehead bones?

A person who doesn't have bones in his forehead asks for bone replacement surgery.

No bones in one's forehead? If it is not something from a horror movie, what does it mean? The image brought to my mind after I heard about the man with no bone in his forehead, seemed to be more awful than that of industrial accident patients; who come to the office with missing hands or scraps of iron or wood stuck in the eyes.

The story of Maitta, who just turned twenty-five, and has no bones in his forehead goes like this....

On a snowy day in December 2004, conditions were very bad. The motorbike that Maitta and his two friends rode overturned on a slippery and bumpy road. Seeing his friend getting caught by the Immigration Office after receiving medical attention for the arm he broke in the accident, Maitta was afraid that he might also get caught, so he left the hospital.

He escaped from the hospital secretly, and hiding himself from the drag-net, he had come all the way from Gyeonggi-do to Busan. He couldn't even remember the hospital name because he ran away so urgently. He didn't let himself have the chance to have surgery, and that's why he had lived for more than one year without bones in his forehead.

Since the Immigration Bureau has reinforced the crackdown on undocumented sojourners, the number of people in hiding has increased. Therefore, a lot of people have decided not to go to hospital, even if they have health problems. And those already in hospital left before their scheduled release dates. This was especially the case for traffic accidents, because

police officers become involved due to their investigation of such accidents.

Officers say it is an unavoidable mandatory reporting duty according to their provisions, but it is too much for undocumented sojourners to hide them in factories, on the street, in hospitals, and at the MOL. It pushes them over the edge.

The undocumented have lost their boundaries to protect themselves in Korean society, just as Maitta lost bones in a spot that should be protecting his brain. Although one becomes a casualty of a traffic accident, a tragic survivor of sexual violence, a patient in need of urgent medical help or a victim of delayed payment, nobody wants to protect the undocumented; even the MOL and the police.

On the contrary, these two government bodies say they are doing a fine job according to the 'Help first, Report second' principle. Yet, how can the undocumented ask for their rights and medical care when there are no rights or care for them in the first place?

As the old saying goes, "Everyone stretches his legs according to the length of his coverlet."

I wish a new day to come soon. That day, people will no longer be afraid to seek medical attention, will have legal jobs and be granted their rights; just like Maitta is waiting for his missing forehead bones to be replaced. **AWN**



"Why am I called undocumented?"



Along with being in the winning team of the American National Football League Super Bowl, Hines Ward was awarded Most Valued Player.

Hines' Korean mother married an American, and his success has caused unexpected interest in mixed-culture children. It has also been revealed that the 'half-blooded' Korean had been ignored and had to fight against discrimination.

Children of migrant workers in Korea have been denied their human rights because of negligence by government policy regarding their welfare benefits and because they haven't been bestowed Korean nationality.

Migrant workers' children who were born in Korea and those children who came to Korea with their parents are treated as undocumented if their parents are undocumented. Moreover, they can't go to school for fear of being forcibly deported, and can't benefit from health insurance.

In a phone interview with Daily Surprise, Park Cheon-ung, the minister at Ansan Migrant Center, emphasized that, "The system to bestow migrant children citizenship is urgently needed."

According to the Center, undocumented children under 15 as of 2004 number up to 21,000, but the number of those children attending school is a mere 1,500.

Park said, "The Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development recommends that migrant children go to school. In reality however, the Ministry doesn't guarantee them legitimate stay until they graduate, and they can be targeted for deportation at anytime. When crackdowns are severe, they don't play outside and can't go to school because they are

fearful. Some of them are concerned about being picked on at school, so they use an alias."

He attributed this problem to the national system that centres on the nationality principle.

"Proper laws and systems are needed to align with internationalization and multi-culturalism. Therefore, I think the Korean government should grant citizenship to all migrant children to allow them to legally live in Korea. The children whose parents are undocumented are worse off, in regard to human rights, than mixed-culture and legal migrant workers' children.

"They are innocent children... Surely the interest that Hines Ward has brought about regarding children from multi-culture marriages highlights migrant children living in Korea needing to be considered and protected. Of the migrant children I have met, there are many excellent children. They will probably be feathers in Korea's cap in the future.

"The reality is that migrant workers are not treated as if they are a part of our neighbourhood.

The undocumented status of parents has been carried down to their children. As soon as they are born, they bump into the reality of being undocumented. It is so cruel.

"Actually, human rights of migrant workers' children have been neglected as an issue in Korea. The status of 'undocumented' will always be with them. It is time for Korean society to take the human rights of migrant children into consideration.

"After getting social response from the general public through campaigns, we are planning to submit a bill to the National Assembly to protect the human right of migrant children."

<Daily Surprise, Feb. 13, 2006>



Do not call us 'Kosian'

Recently, the interest in the half-Korean issue has become deeper due to the success of Hines Ward and Daniel Henney. At the same time, much of the media are calling Koreans who were born to native Koreans and other Asians 'Kosian'. These multi-cultural families are fighting to not have this term used because it urges racial discrimination.

The term 'Kosian' mainly refers to a child born from the marriage of a native Korean and someone from a developing Asian nation, such as Pakistan, the Philippines or Indonesia.

'Kosian' is a compound word of Korean and Asian, first used by citizen groups investigating migrant worker problems in 1997. It came into regular use after a newspaper reported on a multi-cultural farming family in a feature article.

Lately, due to Hines Ward, the football player who has a Korean mother, the discrimination against 'half-blood' Koreans is becoming a hot issue, arousing numerous social disputes.

Mr. Lee Cheol-seung, chief officer at Gyeongnam Migrant Worker's Counsel Office, strongly criticized the reporting behaviour of the press, saying, "Recently, a KBS current affairs program depicted a multi-cultural family as a 'problem family', having severe problems and the children in that family as needing social treatment."

Mr. Lee also criticised those that use the term 'Kosians', saying that "Calling children of migrants who married Koreans and attained proper Korean citizenship 'Kosians' is based on a shallow-minded, pure-blood doctrine, which tries to discriminate against children from multi-cultural families through all possible means."

He also asked, "Why don't they call the kids between Koreans and white Americans or Germans 'Komerican' or 'Koman'?"

►Continued to page 5

Undocumented children under 15 increase by 30% in 12 months

The exact number of children of undocumented migrant workers in Korea is unknown because the parents usually try to hide from the authorities. This number can be roughly estimated however, by looking at known numbers of undocumented visitors in Korea under 15.

With Koreans evading domestic manufacturing industries, the trend of an ageing society continuing, and the length of undocumented migrant workers stays being extended, the number of second-generation undocumented workers is expected to grow rapidly.

According to the MOJ, the number of undocumented workers under 15 is aggregated to be 21,127. This numerical value has been increased by 29.7% (4,841) from the 2004 estimate, which was 16,286.

This number also includes children with dual nationality that were born outside Korea but were not registered after entering the country. Therefore, this number does not truly represent the children of migrant workers in Korea.

An official from the Immigration Bureau of MOJ said that there is no actual statistic for the children of undocumented migrant workers in Korea, and the number of these children could be accounted for by measuring undocumented migrant worker numbers, but it would also have to include many children with dual nationality.

However, the actual number of migrant workers' children in Korea might be higher, since some migrant workers bring their children to Korea on travel visas and keep them here after the visas expire or don't report the birth of a child after having a baby in Korea.

With Korean people evading domestic manufacturing industries, the number of migrant workers entering Korea as

industrial trainees or through EPS is increasing. A considerable number of these people do not exit Korea, even after the expiration of their contracts; so naturally the numbers of their children also increase.

People who had not departed from Korea when contracts expired are estimated to be 184,000, which is 53.9% of all migrant workers. Considering the ratio of undocumented migrant workers in 2002, which was 79.8%, the numerical value has decreased, but the ratio of 35.5% in 2003 and 44.7% in 2004, shows an increase.

Moreover, with the implementation of EPS, in August 2004, the undocumented migrant worker problem is more serious than the statistic in 2003, when 189,000 undocumented migrant workers in Korea had been legalized.

One worker in Banwol Industrial Zone mentioned that out of 15 industrial trainees there, three had disappeared before the expiration of their contracts, and that if they were caught, they would go back to their native countries with only 500,000 won, so they try to hide and earn more money.

Undocumented migrant workers are hiding from authorities by staying in crowded, small industry areas, such as Uijeongbu and Majang-dong, so their children are also hiding from the government's control.

<Kyunghyang Newspaper, February 7, 2006>

Sri Lankan Workers Pay Penalty Without Knowing Why

Five Sri Lankan workers were told to pay a fine by Immigration Bureau employees, even though they were working legally.

On March 2, Incheon Immigration officials illegally caught the five and held them in a Immigration Processing Center for six days.

They urged the migrant workers to sign a memorandum declaring they would pay one million won.

Last August, the five Sri Lankans, who entered the country through the EPS working for a subcontract company by employer's indication and were not aware that such job site movement was in violation of the law.

Ansan Migrant Workers' Centre is urging for the immediate cancellation of the fine and freedom of the Sri Lankan workers. It is also requesting a formal apology and compensation for wage loss and spiritual damage.



MWs, "It's difficult to visit hospital"

The actual situation of medical treatment for domestic migrant workers has been released in a report.

The International Health Medical Treatment Development Foundation oversaw a study at Cheonbuk National University's department of sociology of the actual condition of medical treatment of 685 migrant workers from October 24 to November 27 last year.

According to the report, migrant workers who experienced illness after entering Korea accounted for 61.3%, with 12.8% saying that they could not receive treatment at hospital even if they were ill.

The reasons why they could not go to hospital were 'payment hardship' accounting for 36.1%, and 30.5% 'having no time to go to hospital'. Illnesses suffered were duodenal stomach ulcers accounting for 25.1% of cases. This was followed by high blood pressure at 24.9%, allergies at 18.4%, rheumatoid arthritis at 12.7%, and diabetes at 10.3%.

Many of the migrant workers surveyed suffered from mental health issues due to stress and lack of rest.

UMW children in Medical blind spot

Daniela died at the age of 5 months from congenital glottis stenosis, a respiratory condition that caused her to have difficulty breathing. The 3,000,000 won it cost to pay for an operation to rectify the condition was a great burden to her Ugandan parents, but with the aid of their co-workers and support from a migrant worker organization, Daniela was able to have the surgery.

However, her parents could ill afford the expense of post surgery treatment, about 100,000 won a day, and a respirator, the cheapest being more than 300,000 won. So Daniela had to get along without a respirator and further medical treatment, and unfortunately, after five months of battling to breathe on her own, she died in December.

Her mother says, "I thought she was having her first sound sleep for a long time. My heart aches for my daughter. I let her have such a short life."

Mahiya took his baby daughter out of hospital because he could not afford the expenses. She had liver and heart problems, but he could not afford to pay the 1,600,000 won a week for hospital accommodation and treatment on a monthly income of 1,000,000 won. He now takes his daughter to a general hospital in Guri city in Gyeonggi province. Medical charges have amounted to 2,000,000 won, and he worries whether he can deal with future medical charges, even though he is relatively well-paid as a skilled worker.

Dowa cannot even conceive the idea of taking her 12 year old daughter Handa to hospital. Handa has had a swollen throat since having a tonsillectomy in Mongolia. Dowa finishes work at 7:30 p.m. at the earliest, when most hospitals are not open. She could use her lunch break to take Handa to the hospital, but she is afraid she will make her supervisor angry. She cannot even speak to her manager.

Dowa is nervous, and says, "I wonder how much medical charges are and I feel insecure because I may be detected as an undocumented migrant worker. All I can tell my daughter is, 'Endure it'."

Undocumented migrant workers' children are suffering because their parents cannot afford expensive medical costs. According to the Public Health Medical Ordinances, since last May, migrant workers in Korea can receive free medical treatment regardless of being documented or undocumented. They can get the free treatment at the Red Cross Hospital and 40 other designated hospitals throughout the nation for up to 5,000,000 won.

However, here is the problem; when it comes to undocumented workers, only they personally can benefit from this, their spouses and children cannot. The system of medical support for undocumented workers is largely unknown to undocumented workers, and there is no statistical data reporting how many undocumented stayers benefited from the free treatment over the last eight months.

The response of many undocumented stayers to this reporter's questions is, "There is a system like that? That's news to me."

Undocumented workers tend to deal with medical problems themselves. Migrant workers established an organization called The Association for Migrant Workers' Health in Korea. The Association receives 6,000 won a month from every members to help with its fund raising to support undocumented workers



with medical expenses. Of the 17,000 Association members, 90 percent are undocumented workers.

Those whose children cannot benefit from the Public Health Medical Law, deal with their medical problems through the Association.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Law in 2004, undocumented workers using the association number less than 10 percent of the 200,000 undocumented workers in Korea. In addition, they need to come up with their own money for medical expenses, except for in a state of emergency. When they go to hospital, they pay the bill themselves, and are then reimbursed part of the fee after 30~60 days through the Association. As the Korean government tightens control over undocumented migrant workers, the number of Association members is diminishing.

Kim, Mi-seon, head of affairs at the Association for Migrant Workers' Health said, "Children's rights to health care should not be denied because of their parents' undocumented status. Their medical rights should be guaranteed, even by temporarily qualifying them as legal stayers."

Lee, Un-chang, a doctor who has given free medical treatment to migrant workers, said, "A free medical office is a temporary expedient. General medical care should be guaranteed."

<Kyunghyang Newspaper, Feb. 7, 2006> **AWN**

►From page 4

Mr. Laza, a Pakistani who married a Korean woman in August 2002 and attained Korean citizenship in December 2004 said, "I'm already getting worried about my 3-year-old daughter getting bullied when she goes to kindergarten or school."

Mr. Laza also expressed a strong objection against the term 'Kosian'. He asked Koreans not to use the term because, "People who use 'Kosian' seem so shallow-minded. Koreans are also Asians and Koreans and Pakistanis are human beings."

Mr. Kim Ho-dong, who married a Thai woman in April 2004 and has a 2-year-old daughter, also opposes the term 'Kosian', saying "There might be more advantages to children from multi-cultural families than ones from native families in that they are familiar with two different cultures."

He felt sorry that, "Such a strange term will only disappear when native Koreans stop discriminating against multi-cultural couples and their children, who are also Koreans, their countrymen."

There are about 2500 children who attend elementary school from multi-cultural families in Korea, and there are more than 1 million children from multi-cultural families who are of pre-school age and whose parents were married after 1999.

<Nocut News, Feb. 23, 2006> **AWN**

Time to Introduce Denizenship to Korea

The European Union has been considering the introduction of a Green Card System like the US.

Its aim is to strengthen the EU countries' competitiveness by speeding up the introduction of foreign engineers. European Commissioner Franco Frattini said that they were considering the introduction of an 'American-style model' that provides a permanent labour visa, in order to actively deal with labour shortages and an aging population.

The denizenship system allows migrant workers who want to work in Korea to stay permanently without obtaining nationalization. However, Korean denizenship, introduced by Immigration Management Enforcement, is limited to three years and has no outstanding results.

According to the MOJ, those who obtained qualification for denizenship (F-5) slightly increased from 6,000 in 2002 to 10,000 in August 2005. Moreover, most of those are Chinese immigrants. One MOJ officer explained that foreign specialists who do not have problems in staying in Korea do not apply for denizenship because it is a complicated procedure.

Of 700,000 foreigners who stay for more than 90 days in Korea, 400,000 are migrant workers. Despite this fact, under the current system, only specialists are eligible to apply for denizenship and naturalization. Ordinary migrant workers are allowed to stay in Korea for up to three years and they can re-enter after six months to a year once they go back to their country. This system blocks migrant workers from having an opportunity to become naturalized, which requires a five-year stay.

It is time to consider the introducing the denizenship system. Korea has become an economically developed country, and consequently we have taken the introduction of migrant workers for granted.

Not long ago, there were riots in Paris incited by migrants who felt their needs and rights were being neglected. If Korea continues to neglect migrant worker issues, these kinds of riots will not be occurring in another country.

As the number of undocumented migrant people increases, numbers of their children also increase. Although accurate statistics on them are not available, if the government disregards the next generation, they will grow up in the shadow of Korean society.

It is ten years since the Industrial Trainee System was introduced, and their children have now reached schooling age. We should guarantee their basic human rights, and include them in our society. And in order to share social regulations, their right to receive an education is also needed. Therefore, along with the denizenship system, the door to public education should be opened to migrant workers.

Financial News, March 5, 2006

MW radio station broadcasts in nine languages

A Pleasant Letter from Langantai and Porodash are the names of radio programs.

Langantai means Thai worker in Thai. Porodash means person living in a foreign country in Nepalese. If you imagined migrant workers, you hit the mark. These are just two programs on 'Migrant Labourers Broadcasting Station'(www.migrantsinkorea.net), which opened last May.



In the eight months since opening, there have been approximately 80 to 200 listeners per program. News and music are broadcast in nine foreign languages: Nepalese, Bangladeshi, Mongolian, Thai, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Burmese, English and Korean. However, we don't broadcast continuously, not because of a shortage of capital, but because of a shortage of interest. Considering there are an estimated one million foreigners living in Korea, including migrant workers, it really feels like something is lacking.

Having a radio station specifically for foreigners is an important and powerful step for migrant workers. Programs, such as 'Mongolian News' on Monday, 'A Pleasant Letter from Langantai' on Tuesday, 'Burmese News' on Wednesday and 'Vietnamese Workers in Korea' on Thursday, are broadcast for 1 to 2 hours every day, and this will soon be fixed to 2 hours every day.

Although 1 to 2 hours may not seem very long, it isn't easy work. The people who produce these programs have regular jobs by day. They work like other migrant workers in a sewing company, an LCD manufacturing company and a lighting company. They meet on weekends to prepare for the next week's programs.

It been hard work, to keep 'the dream' alive. In the short term, the goal is to open a web site in multiple languages, having articles written by migrant workers in both native languages and in Korean. The articles will cover culture, history, present political situations, and events in the writers' homelands. It is also possible that daily radio broadcasts of some of the articles will occur.

In the long term, the goal is to achieve an important media function that is essential to Korean society, which is slowly becoming a multi-cultural one. In other places, it's the 'construction of a network with no national boundaries' and an alternative media that paved the way, which is a path that Korea's media didn't choose.

'Migrant Labourers Broadcasting Station' is supported by a progressive network 'Cham Se Sang (real would)' and a labour network. However, operating expenses still run short.

As one volunteer, Park Kyoung-ju, said, "Many talented volunteers want to devote themselves to the project, even though the pay is low, but there is so much financial hardship."

Hankyoreh, Feb. 2006 **AWN**

Singapore rejects domestic workers' Mandatory Day-off

Singapore's government has rejected calls to give foreign domestic helpers a mandatory rest day – a standard practice for workers covered by its Employment Act – because such time off could "inconvenience" many households. New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) last year urged Singapore to provide better legal protection for foreign domestic helpers.

By excluding domestic helpers from its Employment Act, Singapore's labour laws failed to comply with international law, it said, urging Singapore to follow Hong Kong's example by protecting domestic helpers' rights to a weekly rest day and a minimum wage.

But Senior Parliamentary Secretary for labor power, Hawazi Daipi, told parliament on Wednesday that prescribing minimum employment terms and conditions for domestic helpers would inevitably lead to "rigidities and inconvenience" for many families.

About one in six households in Singapore employs a foreign domestic helper, enabling couples to work and raise families. About 160,000 such workers – mainly from Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka – are currently employed in the city-state.

The Ministry of labor power, which said the HRW report grossly exaggerated the abuse and lack of rights of domestic helpers in Singapore, urged consumer watchdog bodies and domestic helper agencies to produce standard employment contracts to include terms such as rest days. <Sources from Reuters, 9 March 2006>

New cabinet resolution on MWs Threatens Migrants' rights

In Thailand, a Cabinet Resolution has been passed that will allow migrants currently without a work permit to register. The conditions surrounding this resolution, however, have raised alarm among NGOs. Of greatest concern are: the stipulations that employers are required to pay a deposit of either 10,000 or 50,000 Baht for each migrant hired depending on their ID status, and a phase of the registration process that will potentially allow employers to recruit from migrants in detention centers. There is grave concern that the new measures will result in increased human rights violations against this already vulnerable and highly exploited group.

On December 20, 2005, the Thai Royal Government's MOL, in coordination with a high-level Cabinet meeting chaired by the Prime Minister, released an ad-hoc policy on migrant labor. The intention of the policy is two-fold: to fill the country's growing shortfall of manual labor with migrant laborers; and to place stricter controls on the hiring of undocumented migrant laborers as part of the efforts of normalizing the recruitment and transit of migrant laborers from the neighboring countries of Lao PDR, Cambodia and (eventually) Myanmar in accordance with the recent MOU on Migrant Labor.

The NGO members have taken note of this resolution and are gravely concerned by it.



By Mi-ran, counselor

Sexual harrassment in my workplace

Q I'm a worker who came to Korea through the EPS. I am the only female worker in the company where I work. One day my co-worker stood behind me and touched my private part. And my boss came to my room, sat down on my bed and told me to sit next to him. I told him that I should call his wife, so I could escape danger. But after that my boss always hugged me, and said that he loved me. I can't speak Korean well, so I could just say, 'Anjoayo.' (I don't like it.) I'm really afraid that I don't want to work at that company any longer. What can I do?

A It is clearly sexual harrassment. First you should go to the (Employment Security Center (ESC) to inform them about your situation and request to change company. Migrant women workers are exposed to sexual harassment, and a large number of them have suffered. But most victims just endure, because of shame, and they don't know what to do. So I'll explain what is sexual harassment and how to react.

Sexual harassment at work refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. The types of sexual harassment are divided into physical (kissing, hugging, touching and requesting touching), verbal (sexual comments, sexual evaluation about appearance, asking and spreading about private sex life, forcing to assist with drink), visual (displaying pornographic, sending pornographic messages and pictures).

If it happens, you have to express that you feel so bad and don't want to do that. You had better learn these Korean expressions: 'Shiroyo.' (I don't like it), 'Hajimaseyo.' (Don't do it), 'Gumanhaseyo.' (Stop it), 'Dowajuseyo.' (Help me), etc. And even if you said, "Don't do that.", don't stop there. You have to write about the situation exactly (when, where, who, how) and send the letter to the offender. And nevertheless if the offender doesn't correct his/her behavior you'd better go to a counselling center and ask for help.

ASIAN WORKERS NEWS

Published by FWR

Editor	Kim Min-jung
Reporters	Shin Sang-whan, Cassandra Beardsley, Yang Seong-min, Choi Jong-sik, Sin Yun-su, Kang Moo-ji, Mark Padlan
Translators	Kim Hoe-ran, Bae Ji-na, Cho Ok-jam, Kim Min-ju, Park Kyung-wun, Kim Jung-yeop, Koo Won-hoe, Park Soon-boon, Park Hae-in, Lee So-min, Jang Won-ju, Yu Jae-won, Hwang Seo-young,
Proof readers	Cassandra Beardsley, Tess Manangan
Layout	Kim Min-jung
Tel / Fax	051-802-3438 / 051-803-9630
E-mail / Homepage	noja@kornet.net / http://fwr.jinbo.net
Address	: 4F Songkwang Building, 193-9 Jeonpo-2 dong, Jingu, Busan, Korea. (Postal Code 614-865)

This copy is free. We distribute this copy anywhere you need. Any foreign community can ask for us to deliver. If you want this paper by mail, send us your address with enclosed post stamps.

Association for Foreign Workers' Human Rights in Pusan
부산 외국인노동자 인권을 위한 모임