

# CHINESE PARENTS SAY NO TO COMMERCIALIZED STUDY TOURS



Overseas study tours for school students, often costing thousands of dollars, have recently attracted controversy amongst Chinese parents in light of a number of surprising incidents.

A photo of a group of primary school children outside a shopping center near New York, Woodbury Info Center, created a storm online as it was discovered that the teachers had been shopping and the students were on the curb eating hamburgers.

There was another incident where parents found out that their children at a renowned primary school in Beijing had a 10 day study tour to the United States, costing 30,000 yuan (\$4,720), which included a trip to Las Vegas. The teachers defended themselves by stating that the casinos at Las Vegas had services for children as well.

In a recent survey that involved over 1000 internet users and was conducted by the online media Chinese company Sina, **49 percent of participants are opposed to allowing their children to go on study tours as they believe that tours have become too commercialized**; 42 percent think that children learn little from overseas study tours and 24 percent find the cost to be too high.

Despite this, there are parents who view the tours as useful opportunities to provide their children with educational benefits. Zhou Li, a mother of a 14 year old student, believes that a study tour assists her son in making a better decision for college. Zhou, along with her husband, has been employed in Beijing for 15 years, but does not possess hukou (a permanent resident permit). Their son will be required to sit the college entrance exam in Zhejiang province, their hometown, which has a higher admission score than Beijing.

"My son will not be able to attend a well-known college if he takes the exam in Zhejiang, so the only option is to send him overseas." Zhou sent her son on a study tour to the US in July. "You need about 1.5 million yuan to provide for your child to study overseas. So what does it matter to spend an additional 39,000 yuan to help him make the right decision?" Zhou said.

**Wang Mingxia, a mother of an 18-year-old student living in the Hainan province, said that the study tour changed her son's mind about his dream university.** When her son was 5 years old, Wang told him the story of the beginning of Stanford University: how the son of Leeland Stanford has died of typhoid fever in the year 1884, and the Stanfords had come to decide that, as they were not able to do anything for their own child anymore, they would adopt California's children as their children, and so they started the university.

"When my son learned about this story, his dream was to go to Stanford," Wang said. Her son went on a study tour to the US. Following his stay in Boston for 10 days, he reconsidered his choice of college.

"Boston has many fantastic universities, and my son likes the Atlantic coast very much as well as the culture, and so he changed his dream college," Wang said.

"If parents and students focus more closely on the reasons for the trip prior to their children leaving, they may gain more benefits from the study tour," said Zhou Xiaolan, who is managing the New Oriental Education's overseas study tour marketing department.

Date: 2012-08-13

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/overseas-study-tours-not-popular-among-chinese-parents-news3362>