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Research essay - final draft

Most Taiwanese people look similar to Chinese people. The main Chinese ethnic group are the Han people. In the 17th century, many Han Chinese came to settle Taiwan, and these people are largely the ancestors of most people in Taiwan today. After Han people came to Taiwan, they killed many aboriginals and took over most lands. Aboriginals could only live in the mountains, or lived in the east of Taiwan. Hundreds of years have passed, and the Han people have become the majority of the population in Taiwan.

About half a century ago, another group of people started to migrate to Taiwan. Southeast Asian workers have become another part of Taiwan's population. Han people, aboriginals, and Southeast Asians are the three largest groups of people that live in Taiwan now. Because of racial discrimination, aboriginals and Southeast Asian workers are not always treated as well as Han people. Racial discrimination is an issue in many countries, even in a peaceful country like Taiwan. Racial discrimination will lead to minority groups losing their rights, therefore, this is an issue that Taiwanese society should address.

Many Southeast Asian people in Taiwan work as domestic workers, servants, factory workers, and also construction and fishing workers. These workers have very little time off, especially those who work as domestic workers because there is so much work to be done when taking care of their elderly patients. However, most Southeast Asian workers make little money compared to workers from Europe, America, or other countries whose expats often work as teachers or in business and make much higher incomes.

Besides having lower incomes, Southeast Asian workers are often treated badly. For example, during the COVID-19 lockdown some who worked in factories were forced to move to inadequate living facilities against their will. According to an article from The Diplomat by Nick Aspinwell, migrant workers were being denied freedom during Taiwan's COVID-19 lockdown. They were forced to move into shared accommodations, while Taiwanese citizens were not told to do this anywhere. Being forced to live in a particular place may not sound that bad, however, where the Southeast workers were forced to live was unimaginable. There were no comfortable beds nor air conditioners. Instead, there were smelly beds and sticky floors. Because of the nasty living conditions, many Southeast Asian workers got sick. Forcing those workers to live in terrible conditions not only affected their health, but also infringed their human rights made this situation just one example of racial discrimination in Taiwan.

Besides Southeast Asian workers, aboriginals are another kind of people that are treated unfairly due to their race. Racism against aboriginals has existed in Taiwan for a long time. In 1624, when the Dutch East India Company first came and colonised Taiwan, aboriginals were forced to work for the Dutch regime. Not only did the Dutch force the aboriginals into working for them, but Spanish, Japanese, and Han people all did the same thing. Many cultural elements treasured by aboriginals have been lost, including their languages and

tradition. The different groups of colonists also killed many aboriginals and seized their lands.

Centuries have passed, but the racial discrimination against aboriginals still exists. An editor from the Taipei Times stated that college students from Fu Jen Catholic University (FJCU), which is one of the top private universities in Taiwan, called a group of aboriginals “monkeys” and “savages” and other inappropriate names. One student posted on Dcard, a huge platform where people discuss issues, saying that “the monkey chorus should get the hell out of FJU...I am so angry that I want to hit them with wild boar meat.” What was ridiculous is that the reason why the Han students called the aboriginal students monkeys was simply because the aboriginal students were at singing practice for their choir in front of the dorms. Many Taiwanese equate aboriginals and savages. However, calling aboriginals “monkeys” or “savages” is truly an act of racial discrimination.

Imagine if people called you terrible names and forced you to live in ratty dormitories. No one wants this, including aboriginals and Southeast Asians. Both aboriginals and the Southeast Asian workers are human, they have the right to respect and safety, as well as protection under the law. However, because of racial discrimination, even laws cannot protect their rights, which is unfair.

In order to give their rights back to them, the Taiwanese government and Taiwanese people will have to work together. For example, the government needs to make laws that are even stricter to prevent racism. Although making stricter laws will help prevent racial discrimination in some ways, it is still not the final solution to the issue because racism is something that exists in people’s hearts. Laws can dictate how people act in public, but they can’t affect how people think or feel. Therefore, a better solution to the issue would be education. Through more education, there will be more chances for Taiwanese people to understand different cultures. Even though the process of understanding and accepting minority groups will take time, Taiwanese still have the responsibility to learn to respect all kinds of people. To get rid of racial discrimination in Taiwan, both the government and Taiwanese people have to work together and make Taiwan a better place for all.