

SE Mosaic
HD **Online middlemen face heavy price**
BY Li Aixin
WC 490 words
PD 26 February 2014
SN Global Times
SC GLOTNE
PG P11
LA English
CY Copyright 2014. Global Times. All rights reserved.
LP

Hao Yuan, a student at The University of Queensland in Australia, spent most of her time between semesters filling orders online. Over the past two years, Hao (pseudonym) went from helping friends back home purchase foods and clothing overseas, to becoming a full-fledged buying agent.

With more than 13,000 fans on social networking website renren.com, Hao is one of the site's more popular online buyers, where customers place orders and she earns a small handling fee for every cosmetic or luxury handbag she ships.

TD

The number of students overseas acting as purchasing agents has boomed in recent years. According to those interviewed, most agents start by doing "favors" - or buying for friends looking to avoid paying 20 percent in import taxes on foreign goods.

After several transactions, friends begin offering to pay "tips." It is common practice for most buyers to tack a 10-percent service fee on all purchases, making for an attractive source of income for any starving student.

"Buyers usually trust students, because they know there won't be any fakes," said Sun Xueqi, a postgraduate student in **Hong Kong** who has worked as a purchasing agent during the past six months.

Sun explained the 3,000 yuan (\$489.8) a month she earns shipping makeup and pharmaceuticals back to **China** comes in handy covering expenses in pricey **Hong Kong**.

Ge Li, who is currently studying in Japan, claimed he earns around 1,000 yuan a day filling orders for cosmetics and luxury bags, reported the Xinhua News Agency.

But buying for others doesn't always bring easy money. Another student studying in the UK told the Global Times her part-time job brings in little and leaves even less time to study.

"After asking a ton of questions, most of the customers do not **buy** anything," she told the Global Times. "They are always worried whether the colors are accurate or if they'll fit different size systems. Some people even cancel their orders after paying a deposit," she added.

Students studying abroad also provided a valuable outlet for **milk** powder during the recent scandals that marred **China's dairy** industry.

Over the past year, Lee Yan has supplied large quantities of **milk** to **Chinese** families during his studies in Germany. Despite earning up to 200 euros a month pushing the white powder, Lee explained the job is more trouble than it's worth and comes with significant risk. It is illegal to operate a **business** while holding a student visa, while those caught face charges from tax evasion to smuggling.

In May 2013, German authorities repatriated a **Chinese** student for fulfilling large orders of **milk** powder from **China**, reported the BBC.

"I'm not willing to continue," Lee told the Global Times, "Once an order went missing, and sometimes packages aren't delivered on time. It makes me and my family very worried."

CO renrn : Renren Inc | tuoqa : The University of Queensland

IN iint : Internet/Online | imed : Media/Entertainment | isocial : Social Media | itech : Technology

RE china : China | queensl : Queensland | apacz : Asia Pacific | asiaz : Asia | ausnz : Australia/Oceania | austr : Australia | bric : BRIC Countries | chinaz : Greater China | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | easiaz : Eastern Asia

PUB Global Times

AN Document GLOTNE0020140226ea2q0000c

Search Summary

Text	((chin* or hong kong)) and (((residential or site or commercial) and (casino resort or island or hotel or apartment or park or estate or property) and (group or firm or company or board or entitys) and (transaction* or purchase* or sale or sold or buy)) or ((uranium or wind or gold or solar or ore or copper or energy or alumina or iron or lead or coal or oil) and (bonds or acquisition or merge or purchase or sale or stake or equity) and (million* or billion* or B or M) and (operations or mining or firm or company)) or ((dairy or cheese or butter or milk or bread or wine) and (sold or buy or sale or equity or stake or merge or acquire) and (brand or company or business or group or firm or board) and (million* or billion* or B or M))) not (terrorism or war or navy or stock market or share market or Wall St or Wall Street or Forex or Stock Exchange or rst=asxtex) and re=austr
Date	01/01/2014 to 30/04/2014
Source	All Sources
Author	All Authors
Company	All Companies
Subject	All Subjects
Industry	All Industries
Region	All Regions
Language	English
Results Found	2,564
Timestamp	29 August 2018 1:23