

Students stage rally to protest time-consuming job-search 'farce'

By KAZUAKI NAGATA

Staff writer

Several dozen young people, mostly college students having a hard time finding work amid the stagnant economy, staged a protest Tuesday in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo, voicing anger at companies they say put unreasonable demands on people trying to get through school.

Japan's infamous corporate recruitment process is a tiring road that lasts months and involves contact with dozens of companies.

The current job-hunting season is mainly for college juniors who will graduate in March 2012. Given the current economic slump, however, it is uncertain if enough positions will be available when they graduate, even for those who receive job offers now.

"The job-hunting process is a farce. . . . Let us live like college students!" the protesters shouted in the middle of bustling Shinjuku.

A member of a student committee that organized Tuesday's rally said the group was established about a month ago to prepare for the gathering.

The committee has about 10 members, all undergraduate or graduate students discontented with the job-hunting system.

"We don't go to college to do job-hunting," said one committee



Hire us, don't tire us: College students hoping to start careers in April 2012 stage a protest Tuesday — Labor Thanksgiving Day — in Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo, to denounce companies that place unreasonable demands on job-hunters.
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member, a 22-year-old Tokyo college junior who asked not to be named.

He complained that companies undermine the lives of college students by, for example, scheduling explanatory sessions in the middle of the day, when many students have classes.

However, "it's like if you don't attend (the sessions), you wouldn't be able to go to the next stage" to get a job with those companies, he said.

He objected as well that the job-hunting process is too long and begins too early.

A female participant told the crowd that, like many women, she faced discrimination during her job hunt.

"As soon as I sat down (for my job interview), I was told 'we aren't hiring for clerical jobs this year,' " she said, adding she is from a rural area where there are few job opportunities.

"It's not that we are rejecting everything about the job-hunting process. We just want to live. We just want a job."

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