

# Taiwan activists push for ban on 'holy pig' contest

February 15 2013



Pigs, manipulated to increase the appearance of their size, are displayed during the controversial 'Holy Pig' festival outside a Taoist temple in Shanhsia, the New Taipei city, on February 15, 2013. Animal rights activists protested the traditional ritual in which the swine are force-fed before being sacrificed in public.

Animal rights activists on Friday protested a traditional "holy pig" ritual in which the swine are force-fed before being sacrificed in public.

[Farmers](#) compete to raise the heaviest pig in the annual ceremony, later killing the animals to please the gods. Critics say the [swine](#) are often kept in small enclosures and are hit on the snout to force them to keep eating.

Demonstrators shouted "Stop the holy pig weight race!" and "Overweight not healthy!" near the Taoist temple where the contest took place as thousands of followers and [tourists](#) flocked to watch proceedings.

The heaviest pig weighed 981.6 kilogrammes (2,160 pounds), with its owner awarded nearly six ounces of gold by the temple authorities.

Facing criticism from animal rights activists, temple officials have previously said they will end the generations-old competition in 2017.

"The temple's chief executive revealed the plan for the first time last year, but since then the board of the temple hasn't discussed the proposal. I fear it's only lip service," activist Chen Yu-min said.

She added that while she respected the participants' traditions, temple authorities should not encourage the weight competition which she described as "abusive and brutal".

Temple officials was not immediately available for comment.

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