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China Labor Watch

China. An Article from a Former Employee of Foxconn

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This is the translated version of a comment from a former employee of Foxconn, which is helpful for us to understand workers' miserable life at Foxconn:

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Within six months, eight employees of Foxconn committed suicide. As one who worked in Foxconn, I feel so sad. I am not sad about young lives passing away, but about that people still have no idea about why they died. Only if right remedy is prescribed will not the tragedy repeat itself.

Now I am thinking that who will be the ninth.

Some experts take this issue as a mystery and can't figure out the reason behind. Yes, that's it! Only people who worked in Foxconn could feel the bitterness and pain. In fact, it's not that difficult to solve this mystery as long as one analyzes the life of front-line staff.

First, most of the front-line staff is post-90s who seldom suffer from pains during their growth. Unlike those who were born before 80s and got used to submission, they get relatively poor capacity of dealing with pressure, strong self-esteem and strong spirit of revolt. I want to ask that whether Foxconn has ever taken frontline employees as human beings! At the best, Foxconn treat their employees with no difference as machines. They never allow their front-line staff to make mistakes. Each product is labeled by the worker's job number. And once any error happens, the worker can be immediately found out and suffers from either a criticism (a curse, more precisely) or a penalty. Some people will immediately refute that Foxconn never fines. But the facts that your year-end prize is much less than others or you are not arranged to work overtime at the weekend is tantamount to penalty.

Second, Foxconn is extremely lack of humanism management. During the 12 hours in a day, except assembly workers, all others have to stand all the time. There is even a standard of how they should stand. If those who want to solve the mystery some time work in the factory for one day or even just stand for 12 hours, how will they feel? Besides, work intensity of Foxconn is horrible. Workers have to concentrate all the time on their work. The machine works at a high speed. And you certainly have to pay all your attention during working otherwise it easily goes wrong. Under such high- pressure environment, people is very easy to suffer from nervous breakdown. As a result, it is not a surprise for them to choose suicide.

Third, front-line workers is physically injured and mentally affected by their night working. Such high-intensity work during daytime is affordable. But how can one survive such high-intensity at night? But this is a requirement in Foxconn that the machines operate round the clock, so do the front-line staff: front-line staff have two shifts to cover the whole day. The biological clock of workers has been completely disrupted. It's even hard to tell the taste of such

pain in words. I was almost crushed when I worked. How can those posted-90s survive?

Fourth, most front-line workers are fresh graduate who need lots of care and guidance. Schools and factories are two entirely different places. Many people can not accept the mental burden immediately after they start working. In the school, one can talk with the teacher and ask for help. But here in the factory, what the management staff cares about is only the quantity and quality of products. They never care about how the workers feel as a human being. Teachers in the school will give you the opportunity to correct when you make a mistake, while the Foxconn never! In addition to scold, they threaten workers to pack up and leave. In fact, people who have been uprooted from their loved ones have brittle nerves, especially in the face of such high-pressure work situation. Without correct guidance, they are easy to go overboard.

In fact, we can't say that the entire responsibility of the jump should belong to Foxconn; Foxconn is a trigger. For those who work in such high mental pressure, they tend to collapse when they are drowned in other small troubles. That's why there have been all the eight jumps.

I despise the so-called experts and scholars who give their conjecture their without any fact and based on conjecture. I even more despised Guo Taiming's practice of inviting monks of Mount Wutai to pray for peace. They didn't try to understand how workers feel but to ask goat for help. I will sadly say that the ninth jump will happen in the near future at anytime!

(translated by China Labor Watch on May 20, 2010)