

Foxconn suicides continue - Four years later, still a graveyard of Chinese youth

Monday 9 February 2015, by [Yi Xi](#) (Date first published: 5 February 2015).

This article contains many pictures and attached files which are not reproduced here. To see them, please go to the original posting (link below the article).

In 2014, on the eve of China's national day celebrations, scenes recalling those of four years ago appeared in Chinese headlines. Foxconn became known to the world four years ago when thirteen of its young workers jumped to their deaths in quick succession. The death of young Foxconn worker and poet Xu Lizhi reminded us that in this *Fortune 500* company that produces some 40% of the world's electronics, the cruelty and hopelessness of workers' situation has not changed. But most of us are unaware that Xu is not alone. At least five other workers, and likely more than that, have joined him this year. Many other workers have taken their own lives since the famous 13.

(Trigger Warning: article contains images and discussion of suicide)

*"The Last Graveyard
Even the machine is nodding off
Sealed workshops store diseased iron
Wages concealed behind curtains
Like the love that young workers bury at the bottom of their hearts
With no time for expression, emotion crumbles into dust
They have stomachs forged of iron
Full of thick acid, sulfuric and nitric
Industry captures their tears before they have the chance to fall
Time flows by, their heads lost in fog
Output weighs down their age, pain works overtime day and night
In their lives, dizziness before their time is latent
The jig forces the skin to peel
And while it's at it, plates on a layer of aluminum alloy
Some still endure, while others are taken by illness
I am dozing between them, guarding
The last graveyard of our youth."*

- Foxconn worker Xu Lizhi (1990 - 2014)

Despite the fading of media attention after 2010, and the dramatic improvements in Foxconn's public image work, the unnatural deaths have never stopped at Foxconn. This year, in addition to Xu's death, there have been reports of five other suicides, one attempted suicide, and one case of sudden death where the exact cause is not yet known. These are certainly not the only unnatural deaths at Foxconn this year. According to Foxconn CEO Terry Gou, the suicide rates at his company are lower than the national average: they are normal. He hopes we will not notice that these are 20-something workers in the prime of their youth—that this group of all groups should not be ending

their own lives. What does it mean that so many young people, whose lives should be full of hope, are committing suicide? No matter what you think of Guo's claims, the conditions at Foxconn are representative of the fate of young workers today: alienation, mechanization, and desperation.

Why this report?

Other than Xu Lizhi's death, not a single other Foxconn suicide this year made it into either the Chinese or foreign mainstream media. This is largely due to Foxconn's successful cover-up work. Foxconn continues to not take workers' deaths or lives seriously. In July 2014, one young male worker by the name of Kang jumped from the Longhua factory complex's Baimingyuan dormitory building. Many workers were aware of this incident—there were many onlookers at the site and pictures circulated on social media—but no mainstream media deigned to cover the event. In a few cases, reports on Foxconn suicide incidents on major media websites have been known to disappear in a few hours. Foxconn has mainstream Chinese media under its grip, and thus the news does not easily make it out.

Furthermore, Foxconn successfully controls release of information about suicide cases, deflecting even requests from relatives. When worker Kang's relatives arrived at the factory on the 28th, but they were unable to dig up much information about their son's death. The factory offered them a mere 20,000 yuan in "humanitarian compensation." They returned a number of the deceased's possessions to the family, but the family suspected the phone had been tampered with, as for several days before the date of the suicide, it displayed no records whatsoever. The family also requested a record of their son's punch in punch out times and his overtime record, but the factory refused. During its negotiations with the family, they claimed to not even know which department the deceased was working in when he committed suicide. Furthermore, the QQ wall of the deceased had been taken down. Family that had access to Kang's QQ wall were unable to find it: it did not show up on searches, as though it had never existed. Foxconn has successfully blocked the leaking of many important details of the case. This, combined with major news sites' decision not to publicize the case, caused the issues to quickly lapse into silence.

Since the 2010 "thirteen jumps," there have been workers committing suicide every year. Many incidents are widely circulated on social media—and some are even video recorded by other workers. But the mainstream media never reports these incidents any more. The factory's cover-up and silencing, including its influence over what mainstream media covers, makes it such that we rarely get to hear of these later cases.

Below is a record Foxconn suicides we know of. We also include two cases of possible death by overwork. The list is surely incomplete.

Foxconn suicides and suspected deaths by overwork since the 13 jumps

July 20, 2010 :: A Liu, male, 18, Foshan Foxconn (deceased)

In the early morning, Liu, a worker for Foxconn subsidiary Chimei Innolux, jumped to his death. Liu began working for Foxconn the previous month, and was technically a dispatch company worker who had been sent to Foxconn. At the time of his death, he had been sharing a dorm with student workers.^{1 2}

August 4, 2010 :: Liu, female, 23, Kunshan Foxconn (deceased)

At approximately 3am, 23 year old Liu jumped from a third floor balcony in the Wusongjiang Yichuang dormitories. Liu started working at Foxconn on March 22nd. Her job was to package plastic washers.^{3 4}

November 5, 2010 :: A He male, 23, Shenzhen Guanlan Foxconn (deceased)

The last known jump of 2010, making for a total of 16. This 23 year old worker jumped from the Guanlan C district dormitories. He had worked at Foxconn for 8 months.⁵

January 7, 2011 :: Wang Ling, 25, Shenzhen Longhua Foxconn (deceased)

Twenty-five year old female engineer Wang Ling, who had worked as an engineer at Foxconn since 2005, jumped to her death from the tenth story of the building where her older brother lives in Shenzhen's Yantian district. Wang had earlier been reprimanded by the company and order to quit and return home.⁶

May 26, 2011 :: Hou male 20+ Chengdu Foxconn (deceased)

At 1am in the morning, a male worker in his twenties jumped from the fifth floor of the Jingying C4 dormitory. He had died by the time the ambulance arrived.⁷

July 18, 2011 :: Cai, male, 21, Shenzhen Longhua Foxconn (deceased)

At 3am on the morning of July 18th, a 21 year old male worker jumped from the 6th floor of the Baimingyuan B dormitory. According to family, the deceased was normally "easy-going and obedient." He had entered Foxconn only half a month ago, and worked as an assistant. According to a cousin, before the incident, Cai seemed mentally well, and even went to a friend's birthday party. It is unclear why he committed suicide. On July 19, the day after the incident, reports on this incident were removed from all major news websites.^{8 9}

October 15, 2011 :: Li Baoqiang, 18, Shenzhen Guanlan Foxconn (deceased)

At around 2am in the morning, 18 year-old Li Baoqiang jumped to his death at from the 15th floor of the Xingge B dormitory. Li was from Xiangcheng county of Xuchang prefecture, Henan province. He was a middle school graduate, who had worked previously in Beijing and Guangzhou, and had come to Shenzhen in September of the same year with a hometown friend. He had found himself a job at Foxconn, and called home after he got the job. His family remembers him being excited to work in such a large factory, and encouraged him to work hard and learn whatever he could. Li's family says he did not have much pressure from home: the family was not poor and could have supported Li, but Li was always independent and insisted on living off his own labor. His family says he was easy-going and rarely picked fights with people. In his spare time, he liked to get online or listen to music and watch movies. The family had not heard of him having any romantic interests, and his QQ wall had no signs of trouble.¹⁰

November 23, 2011 :: Li Rongying, female, 21, Taiyuan Foxconn (deceased)

At 7am in the morning, female worker Li Rongying jumped from Taiyuan Foxconn's D65 building. She was from Luliang Prefecture, Shanxi Province. The factory claimed Li jumped because of relationship issues, thus the factory was not responsible.¹¹

November 26, 2011 :: Xie Yanshe, 21, Shenzhen Longhua Foxconn¹²

January 1, 2012 :: Jia, male, Yantai Foxconn (deceased)

Jia, who had been working at Yantai Foxconn for two months, jumped at 6am on the first day of the 2012 new year from the fourth floor of the A23 building. He worked for the Foxconn's CCPBG (business group), doing CNP varnish baking.¹³

April 24, 2012 :: An, male, 24, Zhengzhou Foxconn (deceased)

In the early morning, male worker An jumped from Zhengzhou Foxconn's Yukang dormitories. The deceased was from Xuchang prefecture, Henan province. He was 24, unmarried, with a technical high school degree and had graduate 7 or 8 years ago. According to his classmates, An had arrived at Foxconn on the 22nd for his interview, and had started his training on the 23rd. According to An's

relatives, the deceased was not a reserved person, and would usually talk to his family if something was bothering him. After the incident, An's relatives repeatedly demanded an answer from Foxconn, but Foxconn never responded to them, and handed the case to the government offices of the Zhengzhou Airport District.¹⁴

April 27, 2012 :: Jin, female, 23, Zhengzhou Foxconn (deceased)

Just four days after An's death, another death took place at the Zhengzhou factory. The two deaths were referred to as the "two jumps." At 6pm in the evening, a 23 year old Henanese female worker Jin jumped from the 6th floor of Fuxin dormitory No. 9. Jin had been working at Foxconn for approximately half a year. Right before she jumped, Jin had skipped work for three days, which at Foxconn amounts to quitting. Jin did not leave after her three days of skipped work, and later jumped to her death.¹⁵

June 13, 2012 :: Xie, 23, Chengdu Foxconn (deceased)

At 4:40pm, a worker by the surname of Xie jumped from the 18th floor of the Northwest dormitories. She had been working at Foxconn for half a month.^{16 17}

September 12, 2012 :: Yang, male, 22, Shenzhen Guanlan Foxconn (deceased)

Foxconn worker Yang, from Heilongjiang Province, jumped from the 9th floor of the Hongxiang dormitories at 8:30am. Someone who knew the deceased reports, that morning Yang was cutting his wrists in his own dormitory on the 8th floor. Then he ran upstairs and jumped.¹⁸

December 10, 2012 :: Li Liangzhu, male, 18, Shenzhen Guanlan Foxconn (deceased)

Li Liangzhu had been working at Foxconn only 40 days when he called home on the 9th to announce to his family that he "didn't want to do it any more" (不想干了). His family encouraged him to come home if he wasn't happy. At 5pm the next afternoon, Li jumped from the stairwell window of a hotel near the Guanlan bus station. Li was immediately sent to the Shenzhen People's Hospital's Longhua Division for emergency rescue, but rescue failed and Li died at 8pm that night. The family demanded 600,000 yuan in compensation from Foxconn. Foxconn replied it would provide some "humanitarian assistance", but it would not bear any responsibility.^{19 20}

December 25, 2012 :: Chen [female] 24 [Shenzhen Guanlan Foxconn (deceased)]

On the evening of the 25th, Chen was at a party with some fellow workers. When the person she liked expressed he had no interest in her, she burst out in tears and jumped from the window behind her. Though the direct causes were personal, the deceased's emotional state could not have been purely shaped by this single romantic interest.²¹

December 26, 2012 :: anonymous, female, 19, Zhengzhou Foxconn

At 3am in the morning, a nineteen year old female worker jumped from Yuhong Shijie Gang building No. 7. Foxconn was not proactive in contacting the family, and only agreed to a meeting with relatives under pressure from the government. On January 4, 2013, relatives blocked Foxconn's main gate and demanded justice for their daughter, but Foxconn continued to deny responsibility.²²

March 29, 2013 :: multiple, Shenzhen Longhua Foxconn

At 9am, a woman worker jumped from the top of the Longhua G4 building. At 11am, three more workers climbed to the top of the building. One online commentator claimed, "Foxconn has fewer orders, they're using all kinds of methods to force workers to quit, so they jump."²³ According to the Huaxia Times, the company was forcing the workers to accept long vacations and refusing to give them any overtime, such that workers' wages were not making even 2000 yuan per month. As one worker understands it, this was a dirty method of forcing people to quit, of avoiding payment of compensation for firing people.²⁴

May 11, 2013 :: anonymous, male, Chongqing Foxconn

At 5pm in the afternoon, a male worker jumped from the top of the Fukang Xincheng B4 dormitory, in view of a crowd of onlookers. The day he jumped was one day after pay day. As one online commentator reports, the deceased had been hoping to quit but his line leader wouldn't approve it, so he decided to quit by skipping work for three days. He started to skip on the 9th, and had not yet skipped three days on the 10th, but his line leader reported him as already having quit and did not pay him his wages.^{25 26}

Video of the jump http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNTU1NjI3MjA4.html

One fellow worker's reflections <http://www.wasu.cn/Play/show/id/965326>

May 14, 2013 :: anonymous, male, 30, Zhengzhou Foxconn (deceased)

A male worker who had entered the factory half a month ago jumped from Yuhong Dormitories building number 5, dying on impact. He was 30 and married with a 5 year old child, from Quebi prefecture, Henan province.²⁷

June 20, 2013 :: anonymous, male, approximately 35, Langfang Foxconn

At 10am in the morning, a male worker climbed to the top of an 8 story high dormitory building and paced back and forth, making ready to jump. The police rushed to the scene and after four hours, managed to convince him to come down.²⁸

October 22, 2013 :: anonymous, male, Chongqing Foxconn (deceased)

Not 5 months after Chongqing's May suicide, another worker jumped. He was sent to the hospital, but the rescue efforts failed. Other than commentary on the internet, there is little other information available on this case.²⁹

December 26, 2013 :: Liang Yongchao, male, 28, Shenzhen Longhua Foxconn (deceased)

Foxconn worker Liang Yongchao was discovered dead in his rented room. Liang had been working at Foxconn for half a year, in the logistics department. The police determined the death was not homicide, citing instead "personal acute illness causing death." However, Liang's family claims he has always been very healthy and has never had any problems. According to one fellow worker, Liang usually worked six days a week. His peak overtime was in October, when he worked nearly 90 hours of overtime. In September and December, he also worked large amounts of overtime. On the 24th, two days before his death, Liang requested personal leave, and on the 25th had a scheduled day off.^{30 31}

January 10, 2014 :: Chen Feng, male, 23, Shenzhen Longhua Foxconn (deceased)

At 5am in the morning, a male worker jumped from a building just inside Longhua Foxconn's South Gate II, dying on impact. The deceased was 23, from Huanggang prefecture, Hubei province.³²

March 20, 2014 :: Li Fei, male, Zhengzhou Foxconn

Zhengzhou Foxconn worker Li Fei climbed to the top of the B5 factory building at 7am in the morning, intending to jump. In November 2013, Li noticed he was getting headaches and hallucinations, and losing his hearing, so he went for a medical checkup. Li worked in a high noise, high radiation environment: his symptoms were clearly work related. Because Li was sick, Foxconn quickly moved to fire him. The company not only tried to evade its responsibility for occupational illness compensations by firing Li, it also refused Li's departure compensation demands, pushing him towards considerations of suicide.³³

April 19, 2014 :: anonymous, male, Chongqing Foxconn (deceased)

At 5am in the morning, an assembly line worker jumped from the Fukang Xincheng D06 dormitory building. According to one online commentator, this worker had been beaten the previous day by three other workers because he could not keep up with the work. After the incident, the line leader

called the four people involved over to talk. The worker jumped the next morning.

July 25, 2014 :: anonymous, male, Shenzhen Longhua Foxconn (deceased)

At the Fuhua dormitories, at approximately 8pm, several workers found a male dorm mate looking unwell and called the police. When EMTs arrived, a dormitory manager accompanied them to the dorm room, where after their examination they discovered there was no possibility of saving the worker. Workers debated online whether the man had died from overwork and whether excessive video gaming had played a role.

July 27, 2014 :: Kang, male, 22, Shenzhen Longhua Foxconn (deceased)

July 27th, at 4:30pm, three-year Foxconn worker Kang fell to his death at the Baimingyuan dormitory complex, the same place where three years and 9 days earlier, a worker Cai had jumped. According to Foxconn, the fall did not happen during work hours, and happened in a building outside the factory complex. Foxconn representatives expressed their condolences to Kang's family, but offered only 20,000 yuan in "humanitarian compensation."³⁴

September 30, 2014 :: Xu Lizhi, male, 24, Shenzhen Longhua Foxconn (deceased)

24 year old Xu Lizhi, a star student gifted with words since childhood entered Foxconn in 2010. During his time at Foxconn, Xu never kept up writing poetry. He never stopped looking for a way out, but after each failure, eventually returned to Foxconn. On the 29th, the second day after a failure to find a new job and his return to Foxconn, Xu jumped from the 17th floor of the Meili AAA building, not far from Foxconn.³⁵

November 6th 2014 :: anonymous, female, Zhengzhou Foxconn (deceased)

A female worker jumped from the fourth floor balcony of Zhengzhou Foxconn's E5 cafeteria. Online commentators claim another male jumped too.

Yi Xi, February 2015

Notes

1. <http://news.hefei.cc/2010/0721/001815245.shtml>
2. <http://v.ku6.com/show/wS1M-jOsPsbPoJiN.html>
3. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/dfpd/shehui/2010-12/27/content_11759339.htm
4. See
5. <http://blog.163.com/kaibc2001@126/blog/static/131087722201010674052990/>
6. <http://www.enet.com.cn/article/2011/0114/A20110114815256.shtml>
7. See
8. <http://www.caijing.com.cn/2011-07-19/110779624.html>
9. <http://bbs.chinazwds.org/archiver/tid-71569.html>
10. <http://www.ithome.com/html/it/5151.htm>
11. <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/1296553504>
12. [Documentary] Fly to Transcend
13. <http://media.itxinwen.com/2012/0102/374622.shtml>
14. http://news.k618.cn/xda/201305/t20130501_3170928.html
15. http://news.k618.cn/xda/201305/t20130501_3170928.html
16. <http://m.kdnet.net/content.php?id=8385791&boardid=1>
17. <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/1662401847>
18. <http://www.zgmotor888.com/news/18736351.html>
19. <http://news.cnfol.com/130129/101,1603,14303693,00.shtml>
20. <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2060480641>
21. <http://www.douban.com/group/topic/35411255/>

22. <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2084694745>
 23. <http://wenwen.sogou.com/z/q440733129.htm>
 24. <http://finance.qq.com/a/20130329/006508.htm>
 25. <http://0830bbs.com/forum.php?mod=viewthread&tid=559345>
 26. <http://www.ruian.com/thread-7081880-1-1.html>
 27. <http://news.dahe.cn/2013/05-14/102166769.html>
 28. <http://hebei.sina.com.cn/news/yz/2013-06-21/101554995.html>
 29. <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2664194992>
 30. <http://tech.china.com/news/net/156/20131230/18251413.html>
 31. <http://news.sohu.com/20131229/n392586425.shtml>
 32. <http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-funinfo-4973843-1.shtml>
 33. <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2931959918>
 34. <http://china.haiwainet.cn/n/2014/0729/c345646-20905863.html>
 35. <http://libcom.org/blog/xulizhi-foxconn-suicide-poetry>
-

P.S.

* <http://libcom.org/blog/four-years-later-still-graveyard-chinese-youth>