

## **LIFE WITHOUT DREAMS: THE LOST GENERATION** (Spring 2007)

A sketch of Yin appeared in the City Scene column of *That's Beijing Magazine*, Jan 6, 2007. He is neither a poster child like Lanjie, nor angst-ridden like Hong. Yin is a self-proclaimed pragmatist and survivor.



He had wanted to study archeology. But he would be jobless, he was told. So Yin majored in electrical engineering. "It is boring and difficult," he said. "I don't like it. But there are a lot of things in life that you just have no say in." Yin never attended class but never failed an exam either because his dad was the professor! Later, one of his father's former students at a prestigious engineering firm gave Yin an internship. For a month, Yin made long commutes to work, sleeping only four hours every night. His slavish dedication won him a full-time job upon graduation. Now Yin still spends twelve hours a day at work. He describes his typical day as follows.

"I get to my office at nine-thirty. I go online and read the news for an hour. Then I work for half an hour, and about eleven, I go to the toilet and s--- for thirty minutes so that I can read some history books. It's a squatter toilet—very tiring. When I'm done, I talk to my girlfriend for a while. Then it's lunch time. After lunch, I'll sleep at my desk for an hour. From two to four, I work. Then I read the newspaper... I take a break, eat dinner, and sometimes take another nap. There is so much to do. I sleep until eight, and then from eight to ten-thirty I'll work again. Then I go home. It's exhausting."

Yin concluded, "I don't like this life but I have to survive. I have to make money. It's hard to find the job of your dreams—a job you like, with good money and easy hours. My job pays enough, so I do it. It's all inevitable, this life I lead." Yin is part of a lost generation, resigned to a life without dreams despite China's newfound prosperity.