

THE DARK SIDE: DEPRESSION & SUICIDE (Spring 2007)

Hong had spent a year in job hunting by the time he graduated with a master's degree from Tsinghua University. He found a teaching position in a small city of South China. The dormitory was crowded, the wage meager, and he was a misfit among students and colleagues who spoke a local dialect. A few months into the job, Hong jumped out of his dorm window. A note to his parents read, "I am not a good son. I cannot find a job. I will be a burden to you some day." (*People's Daily Online*, 3/28/07)

In recent years, with the strong economy and expanded enrollment in Chinese universities, young people have more opportunities than ever before to become better educated. 4.13 million graduated from college in 2006. However, one in four could not find a job upon graduation.



Suicide has become the No. 1 killer of Chinese people ages 15-34. In a study by Peking University that ended last May, 20% of 140,000 high school students said they had considered suicide at some point, 6.5% of them with concrete plans. More than half of those who are suicidal said they had suffered from loneliness. The major sources of stress are exams, relationship, and career problems. These are the pains of a society in transition.