

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1181 Tang Ping – the “Quiet Quitting” Movement in China

We’ve talked a lot about the Great Resignation and the workplace phenomenon known as “quiet quitting.” Did we think this was mostly an American thing? It’s not. However, did you give any thought that it’s also happening in Communist China? Can workers quiet quit there without getting tossed into a hard labor camp of some kind? I’m Jerry Roberts, and I’ve got the details, next, on The Extra Point.

It’s called tang ping, and it’s labeled as a lifestyle and social protest movement in China, which began in April of 2021. That roughly aligns with the timing of the Great Resignation.

Tang ping, also called “lying flat,” is a rejection of societal pressures to overwork, such as in the “996” work system in China. This translates to working 9am to 9pm, six days a week, and Chinese workers have called that “A rat race with ever diminishing returns.”

The genesis of all this began several years ago when a blogger posted his reasons for leaving his job and adopting a minimalist lifestyle. His post was entitled “*Lying Flat is Justice*,” and the tang ping movement was born.

The post went viral on the Chinese Internet and he developed a following on social media. His ideas were praised by many and inspired numerous memes.

Business magazine *ABC Money* claimed it resonated with a growing silent majority of youth disillusioned by the officially endorsed “Chinese Dream” pushed by the communist government. This “dream” encourages a life of hard work and sacrifice — but detractors say there is no life satisfaction to show for it.

How did the government respond? They quickly rejected the concept, ordering online platforms to delete the original story, as well as restrict posts that supported tang ping. In addition, selling merchandise that has any tang ping brand is forbidden. State media called tang ping shameful.

Even Chinese Communist Party general secretary Xi Jinping got involved, writing an article that directly reference tang ping, telling his people to avoid it.

Is this the same as quiet quitting? Not only does it have the same characteristics, but tang ping is thought to have inspired the quiet quitting movement.

A 24-year-old lab technician identified only as “wang” said: “You’re beaten up by society and just want a more relaxed life. I still work, but just don’t overstretch.”

In their words, tang ping advocates prioritize psychological health over materialism. They do what their job requires, but nothing more. Whatever they earn, they adapt their lifestyle choices to it.

Here’s where it gets interesting. Even after the article by the Communist boss, other official voices suggested that tang ping should not be “discounted without reflection — if China wants to cultivate diligence in the young generation.”

Then, a literature professor who researches youth culture at East China Normal University, came out and said that official media outlets may well be concerned about the tang ping lifestyle because of its potential to threaten productivity, but that tang ping is actually the most rational choice for people who can’t catch up with society’s development, rising prices for example.

The thought of China going through tang ping, what we know as quiet quitting, brings up all kinds of thoughts.

China is reported to have a shrinking labor market, which is not what you’d expect in a country of 1.4 billion people. Tang ping has come at a time when officials are already having workforce issues, and this certainly won’t help. (Con’t.)

This is strange common ground we share with the Communists. We don't exactly know how to deal with quiet quitting, and they don't have a handle on tang ping, their version of it.

It'll be highly interesting to see how this plays out in both countries, and elsewhere as the movement spreads.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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