

## **Social Threats, Pain and Suffering in Chinese Past and Present**

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Angelika Messner – Kiel University

Pain and suffering in Chinese history and today is been used as a mental source for counter-discourses, as means of critique of ongoing threatening situations, on a societal level.

In late 19<sup>th</sup> century, for instance, when the Chinese (Qing) Empire was nearly to decline, and foreign troupes invaded the borders, Chinese students (living at that time) in foreign countries raised their voices against the court in Beijing. They referred to a text from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, The *Yangzhou shi riji* (Account of ten days of Yangzhou) which describes a massacre – that raged in Yangzhou in 1645, killing hundred thousand of people.

Pain and suffering are certainly biochemical processes. Yet, in order to get rid of this most common and unmet problem in the modern world (in the Western as much as in the Eastern hemisphere), especially in the domains of medicine and psychology --- we need better models of the nature of pain and suffering. The debate on the meanings of pain is largely present in medicine, neurobiology and psychology. What is badly missing are historical analysis of the lexicons in use in different periods and regions, past and present. With other words --- we need to know more about the emotion-knowledge applied in order to get insights into ways people experience pain physically and mentally.

My paper is concerned with the oscillation between the realities which are supposedly situated simultaneously in the realms of language and in the social and bodily realities of pain. Tracking this oscillatory movement between the (let's say) biochemical processes and the cultural and social textures, will reveal insights into the very textures of pain and suffering in their socio political and corporeal dimensions.