

# The Analysis of Chinese Philanthropic Culture Patterns and the Response to Historical Transformation: A Review of *Chinese Philanthropy: History and Culture*\*

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**Abstract:** *Chinese Philanthropy: History and Culture*, as the first textbook to introduce Chinese philanthropy in China, extracts six basic patterns from the phenomenon of Chinese philanthropy. They are: clan philanthropy, religious philanthropy, local philanthropy, national philanthropy, overseas Chinese philanthropy, and civic philanthropy. This paper reviews the previous historical studies on Chinese philanthropy, and tries to outline the trajectory of the evolution of early modern Chinese philanthropy by integrating the specific time and practice of philanthropic patterns discussed in the book. Since the end of Ming Dynasty, the subjects of "almsdeed" in local society have become increasingly diversified. Besides local scholars, businessmen, and the clan power behind them, some other communities such as merchants, comprador, and overseas Chinese also joined. With the expansion of this subject, the forms of the philanthropic practice also changed. By the end of the Qing Dynasty, the accumulation of ideas and practices since the end of the Ming Dynasty was reinterpreted and interpreted, thus becoming part of the ideological resources of "citizens' public welfare". Meanwhile, various mechanisms of clan charity gradually expanded clan boundaries, increasingly embedded with local affairs and even the "public welfare" related to national interests. They are integrated into the initial exploration and active practice of modern national transformation, and respond to the issues of historical "transformation" of Chinese philanthropic history.

**Keywords:** Chinese philanthropy   Culture Patterns   Historical transformation

Zhu Jiangang's and Wu Huanyu's book, *Chinese Philanthropy: History and Culture*<sup>①</sup>, is the

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① Zhu Jiangang and Wu Huanyu (2020), *Chinese Philanthropy: History and Culture*. Social Sciences Academic

first Chinese textbook focused on Chinese culture of philanthropy. Just as the preamble to the book states, philanthropic activity in contemporary China is quite active and all kinds of organizations and activities are flourishing, but contemporary philanthropic practitioners are not familiar with the Chinese tradition of indigenous philanthropy, nor do they have resources to know about it. Before the appearance of this book, though there had been scholars who tirelessly conducted research on history of philanthropy, their work was more about historical research. As a teaching material in this respect, a book not only needs to provide well-defined concepts as well as theoretical and methodological guidance, it also needs to avoid using obscure terms as in a monograph and ensure its readability. The authors of the book *Chinese Philanthropy* just made extraordinary efforts and filled knowledge gaps in these respects.

Before giving an introduction to the book, this article will take a brief look at historical research on Chinese philanthropy so as to facilitate a review of it.

### I. The Issue of “Early-modern-period Transformation” in Research on History of Chinese Philanthropy

According to available historical texts, previous researches on history of Chinese philanthropy basically took a holistic approach, which provides us with a framework for further explorations. As Fuma Susumu writes in the preface to his book *A Historical Study of Chinese Charitable Shantangs and Shanhuais*, when sifting through studies on *shantangs* (charitable houses) and *shanhuais* (charitable societies) which spanned 300 years in the early 1980s, he found that “Research whether by Christians or by researchers of modern social causes have failed to explain when those *shantangs* and *shanhuais* emerged and in what form. And, basically they gave no account of what those charities actually were, namely what they wanted to do, what they in fact did, or what they accomplished.”<sup>①</sup> These three “what’s” questions showed directly the blank state of this research field.

Therefore, a lot of research in this regard has been published based on original documents collected and analyzed. Zhou Qiuguang, Chi Zihua and other researchers have made assiduous efforts and the most fundamental work in this regard<sup>②</sup>. The most influential work is Japanese researcher Fuma Susumu's *A Historical Study of Chinese Charitable Shantangs and Shanhuais*, in which the researcher used a wealth of historical texts and documents, most notably special documents of *shantangs* and *shanhuais*, called *Zhengxin Lu* (“credit records”), for a systematic, thorough analysis of the history of Chinese charities. According to his studies, Chinese non-governmental *shantangs* and *shanhuais* appeared in the late Ming and the early Qing dynasty, before which time there had been all kinds of relief facilities established by imperial courts, for example the Ming-dynasty charitable houses known as *Yangji Yuan*<sup>③</sup>. Upon its being pointed out, this transition attracted attention and discussion from more researchers. For instance, in her book *Charity and Jiaohua (Moral Transformation): Charitable Organization in Ming-Qing China*, Angela Ki Che Leung tabulates Ming- and Qing-dynasty *shanhuais* and *shantangs* based on 2,615 local chronicles

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Press (China)

<sup>①</sup> Fuma Susumu (2005), *A Historical Study of Chinese Charitable Shantangs and Shanhuais*, translated by Wu Yue, Yang Wenxin and Zhang Xuefeng. The Commercial Press, pp.21.

<sup>②</sup> Zhou Qiuguang and Zeng Guilin (2006), *A History of Chinese Charity*. People's Publishing House; Chi Zihua (2004), *Red Cross Society and Modern China*. Anhui People's Publishing House.

<sup>③</sup> Fuma Susumu (2005), *A Historical Study of Chinese Charitable Shantangs and Shanhuais*, translated by Wu Yue, Yang Wenxin and Zhang Xuefeng. The Commercial Press, pp.31.

gathered from provinces countrywide,<sup>①</sup> which table shows that some *shanhuis* and *shantangs* were “governmental” and others “non-governmental.” Therefore, the emergence of *shantangs* and *shanhuis* signaled a transition from the public to the public-private practice of charity.

Japanese researcher Masako Kohama’s studies on charities in Republican-era Shanghai extend *shantangs* and *shanhuis* research to modern times; in his book *The “Public” and the State in Modern Shanghai*, he not only gives a panoramic picture of the organizational forms and undertakings of old and new charities in modern Shanghai, he also focuses his attention on the Firefighting Association - a non-governmental firefighting organization established in modern Shanghai “out of consideration for public good.”<sup>②</sup> The more into the late modern period, the greater diversity in the form and actor of the Chinese practice of charity; after the introduction of foreign religions and charities to China, there emerged more charitable organizations, and new-style hospitals, schools and institutions.<sup>③</sup> From this historical trend presented by basic data, the period from the late Ming dynasty onwards is worth particular attention. On this point, previous charity studies are focused mainly on the following two dimensions.

First, new trends in thought and notions on charity. Leung is the first to have noticed the change in late-Ming society of the notions of “poverty and wealth”: In the midst of prevalent anxiety over wealth, the original moral significance of both poverty and wealth changed, alongside a redefinition of “the upper class and the lower class.” In a watershed period where poverty was not morally praised as it had been, and wealth not fully recognized, social norms and the demarcation between the upper and the lower class became blurred. At this time, *shanhuis*, which emerged in the last days of the Ming dynasty, became one of social strategies in response to this transition. Founded by the social elite, *shanhuis* made rules on helping the poor, which specified in detail criteria for identifying poor people; distinction thus made filled a gap in what later-Ming laws didn’t define with respect to the upper and the lower class.<sup>④</sup> Among these *shanhuis*, the Tongshanhui was first founded<sup>⑤</sup>, by Yang Dongming, Gao Panlong, Chen Longzheng among other erudite personages, whose idea of charity was derived from the philosophical notion of “*shengsheng*” (production and reproduction) at the core of which was “benevolence towards all things as a whole” and hence compassion for “the poor.”<sup>⑥</sup> This notion later became part of founding principles of new-style charities in the Republican era.<sup>⑦</sup> In her book *Charity and Jiaohua (Moral Transformation): Charitable Organization in Ming-Qing China*, Leung coins the phrase “Confucianization” to illustrate the important change in ideology of Ming- and Qing-dynasty charities. She notes that the notion of charity had been changing: Chinese almsgivers and charity organizers in the Ming and Qing dynasties initiated their causes not simply for the purpose of almsgiving; they turned to mainstream

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<sup>①</sup> Angela Ki Che Leung (2001), *Charity and Jiaohua (Moral Transformation): Charitable Organization in Ming-Qing China*. Hebei Education Press, p. 317.

<sup>②</sup> Masako Kohama (2003), *The “Public” and the State in Modern Shanghai*, translated by Ge Tao. Shanghai Classics Publishing House.

<sup>③</sup> For information on studies in latest 20 years about Chinese modern charities, see: Zeng Guilin (2008), “A Review of Chinese Modern Charity Studies over the Past 20 Years”. *Modern Chinese History Studies*, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 147-160.

<sup>④</sup> Angela Ki Che Leung (2017), “The Historical Change in Chinese Secular Society of the Notions of ‘Poverty’ and ‘Poor People’”, from *Seeking Stability in Change: Enlightenment and Almsgiving from the Ming and Qing Dynasties through Modern Times - Collected Works of Angela Ki Che Leung*. Shanghai People’s Publishing House, pp. 83-107.

<sup>⑤</sup> Fuma Susumu (2005), *A Historical Study of Chinese Charitable Shantangs and Shanhuis*, translated by Wu Yue, Yang Wenxin and Zhang Xuefeng. The Commercial Press, pp.78.

<sup>⑥</sup> Fuma Susumu (2005), *A Historical Study of Chinese Charitable Shantangs and Shanhuis*, translated by Wu Yue, Yang Wenxin and Zhang Xuefeng. The Commercial Press, pp.107.

<sup>⑦</sup> Fuma Susumu (2006), “A History of Chinese Charitable *Shanhuis* and *Shantangs*: Development from ‘Good Deeds’ to ‘Charitable Causes’”. *Chinese Social History Review*, Vol. 7., pp.5.

Confucian values into which they also integrated popular folk beliefs and ideas, as evidenced by charitable practices of highly moral significance like the Qingjietang dedicated to helping widows and the Xizihui that helped people accumulate virtue by their doing good deeds unknown to others. In actual organization and participation, Confucian scholars of middle and low social status were also closely associated with activities of *shantangs* and *shanhuis*, which reflects this group of persons' aspirations in social life to maintain and accumulate "symbolic capital"<sup>①</sup> - actually a kind of endeavor to seek social resources. Obviously, the change that occurred in the late Ming and the early Qing dynasty of notions and beliefs was one of driving factors behind the emergence of *shantangs* and *shanhuis*, whose establishment, apart from their purpose of helping the poor and the young and helpless, played a vital role in the change of social classes and in the congregation of local wealth and groups of people.

Second, diversification and expansion of the practice of charity. The change in this respect was mainly two-fold. On the one hand, the content of the practice of charity expanded. At the time the Tongshanhui appeared, there also emerged other forms of charities, e.g. The Jiangxuehui, Fangshenghui (Fangshengshe), Yangeshui, Xulihui, Pujitang, Yuyingtang, etc. Driven by the notion of "*shengsheng*", these *shanhuis*, which were devoted to different charitable causes, expanded their original type of objects and form of practice to include running free schools, practicing life release, burying skeletons, constructing burial grounds for the destitute, helping widows and widowers, helping the poor, administering medicine, etc., which later became the scope of practice for every *shantang*. We can see that the *shantang* tradition that continued into the modern times, though expanded over time, followed this pattern for the most part. This "charitable system", because it covered various aspects of social life,<sup>②</sup> also assumed local public undertakings. On the other hand, the actor of charity increasingly diversified. Fuma Susumu observes that a multitude of *shantangs* and *shanhuis* that emerged in the late Ming and the early Qing dynasty were related to a trend among Confucian scholars of forming societies and associations at the time, and their proponents included industrialists and businessmen and trade guilds, in addition to landlords. In the late Ming dynasty, the networks of *xiangshen* (country gentry) and *shengyuan* (gentry who passed the entry-level exam of the imperial exam) centered in subprefectures, prefectures and districts became the main groups of people in charge of local affairs, and they took charge of charitable undertakings related to welfare and relief<sup>③</sup>. It is obvious that the actors of charity in this period increasingly diversified, whose organization also paved the way for charitable causes in the period that followed.

On the two changes described above, Japanese researcher Yuzo Mizoguchi goes deeper from the perspective of intellectual history. He focuses his attention on the role that Chinese "local governance" had in forming the "space for local governance", notices the profound influence that the expansion of this space had on the Xinhai Revolution, and re-examines the importance and underlying driving force of the Xinhai Revolution, on which basis he comes up with a hypothesis about the process of Chinese modern history. So-called "local governance" has to be traced, from the angle of intellectual history, back to what Huang Zongxi, of late Ming dynasty, spoke of as "governing local official business with local hands", and the "local governance movement" was

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<sup>①</sup> Angela Ki Che Leung (2001), *Charity and Jiaohua (Moral Transformation): Charitable Organization in Ming-Qing China*. Hebei Education Press, p. 317.

<sup>②</sup> Fuma Susumu (2005), *A Historical Study of Chinese Charitable Shantangs and Shanhuis*, translated by Wu Yue, Yang Wenxin and Zhang Xuefeng. The Commercial Press, pp.161.

<sup>③</sup> Fuma Susumu (2005), *A Historical Study of Chinese Charitable Shantangs and Shanhuis*, translated by Wu Yue, Yang Wenxin and Zhang Xuefeng. The Commercial Press, pp.154.

focused largely on “local moves of charity”, namely the foregoing series of charitable practices.<sup>①</sup> According to this hypothesis, the activity and development of the sector of charity is then embedded in the building and evolution of “local governance space” and even autonomous space with “province” as the unit, and the operation and accumulation of traditional charity is also crucial for an analysis of this process of social transformation.

Yuzo Mizoguchi raises this intellectual thread on a relatively abstract plane, which presumably collides to a certain degree with observations and research conducted from social and cultural perspectives as in studies by Fuma Susumu, Leung et al. where we could notice a charitable thread running through specific social changes, thoughts prevalent in groups of people, and organizational operations. From the historical perspective, both echo one another when it comes to relations with intellectual history.<sup>②</sup> More important is that these studies have revealed, from different angles, that in late-Ming and early-Qing China, the space for autonomy in which local forces played dominant roles began coming into being, and the practice of charity was embedded as an important part of it. And they also have noticed the appearance of new trends in the Chinese tradition of charity in the early modern period from the late Ming to the early Qing dynasty, and close relations between this change and the tradition of charity and even Chinese society in the times that ensued. From the observation of this “early modern” change, we may also notice that the cultural framework of charity it had given rise to, showed great flexibility and continuity in subsequent times to take in the impact of new social changes. It is just this tradition yet to be thoroughly sifted that set the scene for modern new-style charity and became one of the key elements necessary for the forming of the social manners of a modern China.

## II. Main Content of *Chinese Philanthropy* and Its Response to Historical “Transformation”

While the book *Chinese Philanthropy: History and Culture* examines the tradition of Chinese philanthropy from historical and cultural perspectives, has it responded to the aforesaid issue of “early-modern-period transformation”? In its preamble, the authors first make clear the definition and characteristics of “charity”, for which the concept of “great charity” as defined in the Charity Law of the People’s Republic of China is adopted. They also point out that this concept is consistent on national level with non-governmental philanthropy, and that as an investigation into Chinese history of charity would inevitably involve broader Chinese history and culture, the concept of “Chinese culture” is explored at the same time, on which basis the authors present a picture of plurality and unity in Chinese charity culture<sup>③</sup>. This book is intended not to outline “Chinese philanthropy” with well-defined boundaries, but to present a plural and mixed view of charitable culture. To this end, the book distills from the convolutions of the practice of charity six basic models: Clan charity, religious charity, local charity, national charity, overseas Chinese charity, and civic charity. These six models have their particularities each and also overlapping characteristics. Below is a chronological account of when these models appeared and in what form, before we look into

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<sup>①</sup> Yuzo Mizoguchi (2014), “New Discussions on the Xinhai Revolution”, an article contained in Yuzo Mizoguchi’s *The Historical Pulse of China*, translated by Qiao Zhihang, Gong Ying et al. SDX Joint Publishing Company, pp. 296-323.

<sup>②</sup> For Fuma Susumu’s response to this issue, see: Fuma Susumu (2006), “A History of Chinese Charitable *Shanhuis* and *Shantangs*: Development from ‘Good Deeds’ to ‘Charitable Causes’”. *Chinese Social History Review*, Vol. 7., pp.1.

<sup>③</sup> Zhu Jiangang and Wu Huanyu (2020), *Chinese Philanthropy: History and Culture*. Social Sciences Academic Press (China), pp.11.

historical logic behind their forming and into the details of the “early-modern-period transformation” issue.

1. Religion and Charity. What is the first to have had relations with charity in China is Buddhism that was introduced to China during the Tang dynasty. Under the influence of the Buddhist idea of “*zhongfutian*” (cultivation of the field of merits), many temples operated such a charitable facility to help poor people as “*beitianyuan*” (house of mercy); beginning in the Southern and Northern dynasties, “*wujinzang*” (inexhaustible treasury) among other charitable undertakings were carried out. Throughout history, different religious ideas provided theoretical and spiritual resources for charity in China and assimilated its notions and beliefs into practice. In its chapter “Religion and Philanthropy”, *Chinese Philanthropy* gives a brief description of the characteristics of religious charity, and introduces specific charitable practices of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Taoism in China - the Tzu Chi Foundation in contemporary eastern Taiwan, the Canton Hospital founded in Republican-era Guangzhou, the Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association in Hong Kong, and the Xinggong Caotang of Guangzhou founded by merchants and construction guilds during the late Qing dynasty, which four cases also demonstrates the plurality of religious charity and its lasting vitality.

2. Clan and Charity. In the chapter “Clan and Charity”, the author starts off with the history of clans and examines the course of clan charity that first appeared in the Tang and Song dynasties and thrived in the Qing dynasty. And they point out that clan charity was carried out on the strength of the Confucian notions of patriarchal ethics, filial piety and fraternal duty, ancestry and kindred, taking the main form of helping old, weak and poor clansmen through clan-owned properties. This chapter illustrates in detail the evolution, management and operation of clan charity with three cases of *yizhuang* (“mansion of righteousness”; charitable organization) - the Fan Clan Yizhuang in Suzhou, the Bao Clan Yizhuang in Tangyue, She County, and the Hua Clan Yizhuang in Dangkou, Wuxi. In particular, the founding of the Fan Clan Yizhuang in the Song dynasty set up the example of clan charity helping clansmen through clan-owned properties. The authors note that the main trend in the evolution of clan charity was “a process of change from institutionalized handing-out to institutionalized relief”<sup>①</sup>, which was completed in the Song through the Qing dynasty. If we treat clan charity from a broader, historical point of view, namely from the perspective of historical anthropology, we will find that the forming of a patriarchal society in southern China during the Ming and Qing dynasties was associated directly with ritual reforms since the Song dynasty. Clans were also involved in the process of gentrification of Ming and Qing society, and their gradual development was just manifested in ideological change that centered on rituals<sup>②</sup>. Clan charity just worked in these gradually stabilized economic and ritual relations and became part of grass-roots social governance and ritual indoctrination, the process of this overlapping in part with the flourishing local practice of charity in the Ming and Qing dynasties to be discussed below.

3. Local Society and Charity. To investigate the emergence in local society of neither governmental nor religious charities, it is necessary to look, above all, into the forming process of local society. Beginning in the Southern Song dynasty, Luo Zhitian notes, as there had emerged phenomena of “emptiness in commanderies and districts” under the imperial rule of high uniformity and centralization, there was a trend of “sending the rules of ceremony down to the common people” ,

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<sup>①</sup> Zhu Jiangang and Wu Huanyu (2020), *Chinese Philanthropy: History and Culture*. Social Sciences Academic Press (China), pp.28-29.

<sup>②</sup> David Faure and Liu Zhiwei (2020), “National Identity of Clans and Local Society: Ideological Foundations for Development of Southern Chinese Clans in the Ming and Qing Dynasties”. *Historical Research*, Issue 3, pp. 3-13.

which was advocated by Confucian scholars so as to indoctrinate the underclass and also build a local society of rituals and ceremonies. But in physical space in which people lived, the state's administrative power could hardly reach grass-roots society below district government, and so there emerged what Yuzo Mizoguchi terms "local governance space", <sup>①</sup>a social space where governance was carried out by local scholars, merchants and clan forces behind them<sup>②</sup>. The foregoing appearance in the late Ming dynasty of new charities, in which Fuma Susumu is interested, just happened in this space. This space was forced in the late Ming and the early Qing dynasty and gradually expanded in ages that ensued. In the meanwhile, the governance and actual operation of local society was, as recorded from the angle of an imperial state, in "a state in which it was indispensable but not taken seriously, and so not spoken of in detail<sup>③</sup>." Nevertheless, the development of local charities happened to offer us an angle of observation by which we may have a look at how those respects "not spoken of in detail" actually went on. The so-called practice of "governing local official business with local hands" expanded over the course of time, alongside the emergence of new forces that oversaw local affairs, e.g. the guilds of merchants, and compradors in the late Qing dynasty, and overseas Chinese in the Republican era. In its chapter "Local Charity", *Chinese Philanthropy* analyzes two cases: one is Chaoshan *shantangs* that originated in the late Qing dynasty, and the other is the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals founded in the early days of the Republican era. Interestingly, the two cases both emerged in a region that the terminal administrative power of a traditional state was unable at the time to govern: the rural society of the Chaoshan region was a typical "local governance space", and the Chinese community in Hong Kong from the late Qing dynasty to the Republican era was all the more in a state where the Qing government was powerless to control and the British colonial government found it "impossible to rule<sup>④</sup>." Both cases fully show that charity was involved in various aspects of local society, and also illustrate the importance of charities to this social space.

4. Overseas Chinese Charity. The footprints of Chinese immigrants had spread overseas since the Ming empire lifted its sea ban in the 16th century, and these Chinese people linked up in new "local" society, out of their identification with their places of origin. We could also say that the world "local" here went beyond geographic boundaries to expand to the overseas Chinese community, which became part of the charitable system<sup>⑤</sup>. In the chapter "Overseas Chinese Charity", the authors look into the process of the forming of overseas Chinese charity and its relations with local society since the late Qing dynasty through charities in three places noted for Chinese expatriates - Shunde, Wenzhou, and Heshun of Yunnan. Those Chinese expatriates were concerned for development of their hometowns, and their charitable practice also directly boosted governance and development back there. As described in one of the cases, the Shun Tak District Min Yuen Tong of Hong Kong was closely associated with the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals which,

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<sup>①</sup> Luo Zhitian (2015), "Early Modern History of Chinese Territories: Sending the Rules of Ceremony Down to the Common People and Rural Society at a Time of 'Emptiness in Commanderies and Districts'". *Modern Chinese History Studies*, Issue 5, pp. 6-28.

<sup>②</sup> Yuzo Mizoguchi (2014), "New Discussions on the Xinhai Revolution", an article contained in Yuzo Mizoguchi's *The Historical Pulse of China*, translated by Qiao Zhihang, Gong Ying et al. SDX Joint Publishing Company, pp. 306.

<sup>③</sup> Luo Zhitian (2015), "Early Modern History of Chinese Territories: Sending the Rules of Ceremony Down to the Common People and Rural Society at a Time of 'Emptiness in Commanderies and Districts'". *Modern Chinese History Studies*, Issue 5, pp. 7.

<sup>④</sup> Zhu Jiangang and Wu Huanyu (2020), *Chinese Philanthropy: History and Culture*. Social Sciences Academic Press (China), pp.133-134.

<sup>⑤</sup> Zhu Jiangang and Wu Huanyu (2020), *Chinese Philanthropy: History and Culture*. Social Sciences Academic Press (China), pp.21.

as a hub of transit for transporting the bodies of deceased overseas Chinese people to their native places, was a major point for the charity's Huaiyuan Yizhuang to receive skeletons of its clansmen who had lived abroad. From such special charitable practices, we could get a glimpse of how, in a grand tide of globalization, a network of Chinese people maintained the normal running of social life by means of traditional kindred beliefs and modern charity mechanisms.

5. Citizens and Charity. Beginning with the First Sino-Japanese War, Chinese society saw drastic changes like never before. Foreign invasions and the necessity of building a modern nation made the intellectual and political elites of China begin to become aware of the urgency of reform. “*Gongyi*”, the original Chinese phrase for the common good which referred to “local public business”, was lent a broader, modern meaning<sup>①</sup>, and there were also new changes that happened to the corresponding practice of charity. The chapter “Citizens and Charity” clearly points out, and explains in detail, relations between the change in the notions of *gongyi* and the modern transformation of Chinese society. By sifting the meanings of “*gongyi*”, the authors observe that “*gongyi*” originated in the late-Qing tide of “*qunxue*” (sociology) thought, and the practice of it was later incorporated by people of noble aspirations - most notably anarchists among them - into the scope of “social revolution” which comprised an arrange of common-good practices including establishing new-style *shantangs*, schools, and carrying out rural development movements. The instances described in this chapter include Pan Dawei’s practice of the common good, Xu Maojun’s “Gongyi New Village”, and the rural development movement of the 1920s, all of which went far beyond the scope of traditional charity in terms of content and goals. The intention of practicing charity at the time was to “open up the people’s minds” and “cultivate citizens”, which became the primary form of modern civic charity and morphed into one of what underlie “civic philanthropy” today. The historic time at which a modern transformation took place in Chinese society saw also the birth of “civic philanthropy.”

### III. Conclusion and Discussion

The book takes a holistic approach in presenting a picture of charity in China in roughly a chronological order. Apart from the chapter “Clans and Charity”, which describes the practice of charity among different types of clans and is not arranged chronologically, the chapters from Chapter II “Clan Charity” to Chapter VII “Civic Charity” are arranged in a chronological order, namely from the Tang and Song dynasties until the contemporary age, covering the entire process of Chinese history in between and overseas Chinese communities. In light of this thread of charity and the specific age and practice of different types of charity, we can draw quite a clear trajectory of charity evolution in China: Unlike the previous pattern of practicing charity in which the state or temples played a dominant role, the actors of charity and their practice thereof in the late Ming and the early Qing dynasty began expanding owing to socio-economic and ideological changes. In the forming of the initial framework of local charity also, institutionalized clan charities were involved, thus paving the way for a charitable practice system that lasted from the late Ming dynasty to the modern times and becoming a crucial part of the governance and actual operation of local society. This mechanism changed over time to include also overseas Chinese, the late-Qing intellectual and

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<sup>①</sup> Wu Huanyu (2018), “Birth of the Notion of Chinese Modern ‘Philanthropy’: Concept Genealogy and Structural Process”. *Chinese Journal of Sociology*, Issue 6, 2018, pp. 180-215.



political elites, among others, as actors of charity. Charity beliefs and practices accumulated since the late Ming dynasty were re-interpreted and elucidated in light of the history of the late Qing dynasty and the early Republican era so that they became part of ideological resources for “civic philanthropy.” Charity now had a much broader scope and was embedded in initial thinking and positive practice concerning a modern transformation of Chinese society. The interactions between these six cultural types were embedded in the process of modern national transformation and of the change in actors of charity, and for analysis and investigation on “clan charity”, “local charity”, “overseas Chinese charity” and “civic charity” in particular, they could be used to answer the question of historical “transformation” of Charity in China.

The dimension of a long period of history plays a linking role in this observation framework, outlines the gradual evolution over time of a Chinese culture of charity, and also provides a much wider angle of view. Just as Zhang Peiguo says: “The practice of welfare in the Chinese historical context was but a product of the integration of political, economic, cultural and other fields, and it was not even possible to demarcate boundaries between production and life.”<sup>①</sup> The deeper one looks into the threads of charity in China, the more one will find that it would be an impossible job to talk about “charity” in itself with a breakaway from a holistic view of history. It is regrettable, from the perspective of an observation framework, that the book, for various reasons, didn’t include “the state” as an actor of charity in its analysis of the six types of charity. But, with specific historical and anthropological cases analyzed, the book answers and supplements, from the perspective of historical threads, the question of “early-modern-period transformation” on which previous charity studies were focused, on the one hand; on the other, within a framework consisting of six basic models, it makes observations, from a holistic point of view of Chinese society, on the evolution of charity in China, and in this sense, promotes historical research on the “early modern period” of Chinese society. This study conducted from historical and cultural dimensions can be regarded as an estimable first step in the field of charity research. As a piece of research on the continuous process of the “late-modern-period” transformation of charity and of the birth of modern “civic philanthropy”, this book not only looks into the endogenous line of connection between traditional charity and modern philanthropy in China, but also presents a picture of profound changes in the state and society in the same period. For today’s philanthropic practitioners and charity researchers focused on addressing practical issues, this rich and lucid research for sure will help them to understand the historical threads and the intrinsic spirit of modern and contemporary philanthropy, to have a comprehensive grasp of the plurality of the Chinese culture of charity, and to advance their analysis and research on practical issues.

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Yuzo Mizoguchi (2014), “New Discussions on the Xinhai Revolution”, an article contained in Yuzo Mizoguchi’s *The Historical Pulse of China*, translated by Qiao Zhihang, Gong Ying et al. SDX

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<sup>①</sup> Zhang Peiguo (2017), “Social Logic of Traditional Welfare Practice in China: An Interpretation Based on Studies about Ming- and Qing-dynasty Society”. *Sociological Studies*, Issue 2, 2017, p. 226.

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