



Chinese Diaspora Charity and the Cantonese Pacific, 1850–1949

(華僑慈善與環太平洋區的廣東人世界 1850–1949)

Edited by **John Fitzgerald** and **Hon-ming Yip**

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Chinese Diaspora Charity and the Cantonese Pacific, 1850–1949 sheds new light on the history of charity among Chinese overseas and its place in the history of charity in China and in the wider history of global philanthropy. It finds that diaspora charity, besides serving traditional functions of helping the sick and destitute and supporting development in China, helped to build trust among dispersed hometown networks while challenging color boundaries in host societies by contributing to wider social causes. The book shows that charitable activities among the “Gold Rush” communities of the Pacific rim—a loosely integrated émigré network from Guangdong Province perhaps better known for its business acumen and hard work among English-speaking settler societies in North America and Australasia—also led the way with social innovations that helped to shape modern charity in China.

Fitzgerald and Yip’s volume demonstrates that charity lay at the heart of community life among Chinese communities overseas. From remittances accompanying letters to contributions to benevolent organizations, emigrants transferred funds in many different ways to meet urgent requirements such as disaster relief while also contributing to long-term initiatives like building schools or hospitals. By

drawing attention to diaspora contributions to their host societies, the contributors correct a common misunderstanding of the historical Chinese diaspora which is often perceived by host communities as self-interested or disengaged. This important study also reappraises the value of charitable donations in the maintenance of networks, an essential feature of diaspora life across the Cantonese Pacific.

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