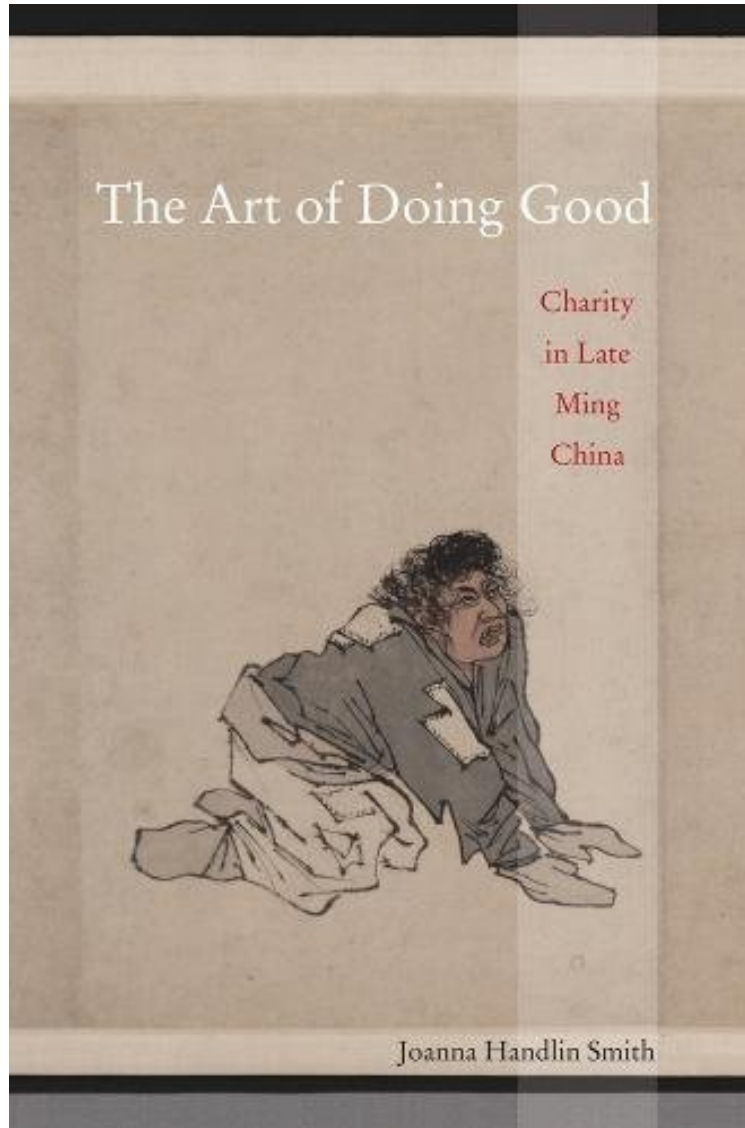


[Download free pdf] The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China

The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China

Joanna Handlin Smith

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Joanna Handlin Smith : The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China:

An unprecedented passion for saving lives swept through late Ming society, giving rise to charitable institutions that transcended family, class, and religious boundaries. Analyzing lecture transcripts, administrative guidelines, didactic

tales, and diaries, Joanna Handlin Smith abandons the facile explanation that charity was a response to poverty and social unrest and examines the social and economic changes that stimulated the fervor for doing good. With an eye for telling details and a finesse in weaving the voices of her subjects into her narrative, Smith brings to life the hard choices that five men faced when deciding whom to help, how to organize charitable distributions, and how to balance their communities' needs against the interests of family and self. She thus shifts attention from tired questions about whether the Chinese had a tradition of charity (they did) to analyzing the nature of charity itself. Skillfully organized and engaging, *The Art of Doing Good* moves from discussions about moral leadership and beliefs to scrutiny of the daily operation of soup kitchens and medical dispensaries, and from examining local society to generalizing about the just use of resources and the role of social networks in charitable giving. Smith's work will transform our thinking about the boundaries between social classes in late imperial China and about charity in general.

[Smith] convincingly proves that charity was a vibrant motivation for many in [the Ming] period.