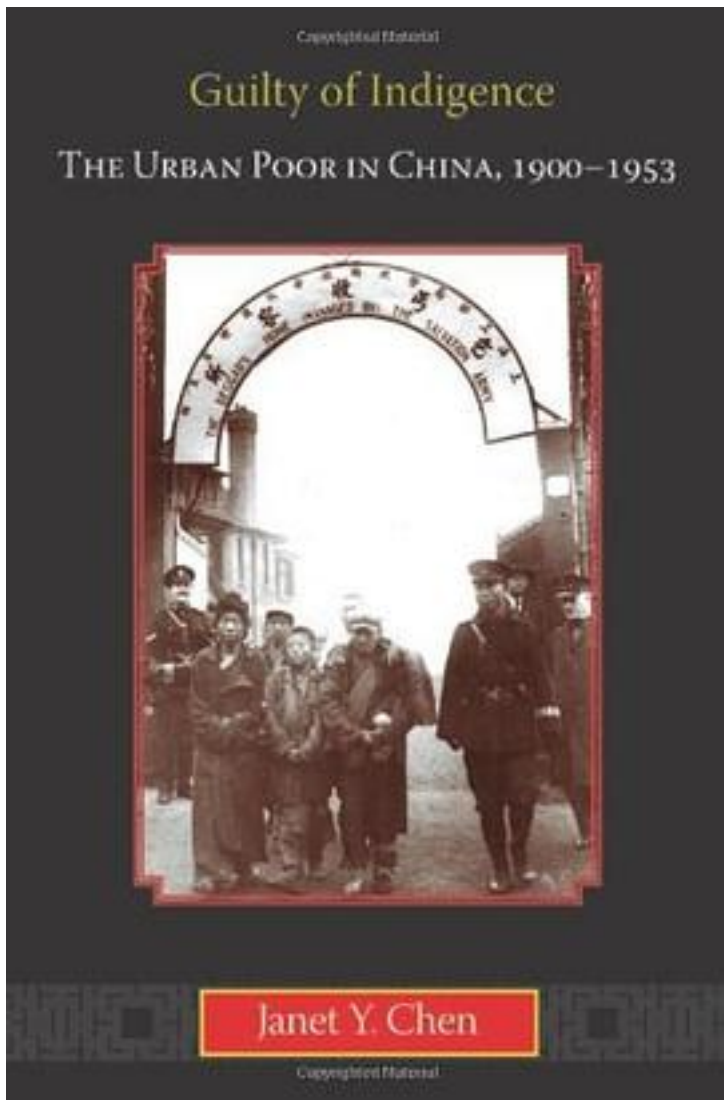


Guilty of Indigence



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In the early twentieth century, a time of political fragmentation and social upheaval in China, poverty became the focus of an anguished national conversation about the future of the country. Investigating the lives of the urban poor in China during this critical era, *Guilty of Indigence* examines the solutions implemented by a nation attempting to deal with "society's most fundamental problem." Interweaving analysis of shifting social viewpoints, the evolution of poor relief institutions, and the lived experiences of the urban poor, Janet Chen explores the development of Chinese attitudes toward urban poverty and of policies intended for its alleviation.

Chen concentrates on Beijing and Shanghai, two of China's most important cities, and she considers how various interventions carried a lasting influence. The advent of the workhouse, the denigration of the nonworking poor as "social parasites," and efforts to police homelessness and vagrancy--all had significant impact on the lives of people struggling to survive. Chen provides a crucially needed historical lens for understanding how beliefs about poverty intersected with shattering historical events, producing new welfare policies and institutions for the benefit of some, but to the detriment of others.

Drawing on vast archival material, *Guilty of Indigence* deepens the historical perspective on poverty in China and reveals critical lessons about a still-pervasive social issue.

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标签

海外中国研究

社会史

城市史

历史学

历史

民国

近代史

中国现代史

评论

讲的是整个民国期间北京上海贫民救济史，略及晚清和新中国。吸引我的是导论里提到 politics of exclusion 和 citizenship 的问题，不过我并不觉得经验材料回应了这个概念，或者说，那个时期更接近于 nation-building 的问题而很难说与 citizenship 相关。书里大概有这样几条主线：前半本书“贫穷”这个概念在晚清民国的知识史，贯穿全书的政府针对贫民的救济院，以及后面几章均提到上海 hut dwellers 抗争。前两条线福柯味道略浓以致于让人怀疑经验材料的广度，抗争这部分并不跟前头完全搭得上。应当是一个有理论想象力的题目，但这方面的讨论只有导论的几段，难免让丰富的材料显得零散，经验和概念的关系显得疏离。或许单纯地把它当作救济史看会更好一些。

一项关于”排斥“的政治学研究。对20世纪早期政治戏剧中不断变换的“贫”的概念进行捕捉，关注这一时期生活在以强迫劳动为手段的“习艺所”阴影下的城市贫民及其被污名化和犯罪化的社会排斥过程。港刊将之译为“贫困之疚”，不确，“穷是个罪”更贴切。

上海 北京 “parasites upon society” —2014年11月13日

寫得好，語言很好。poverty一詞在不同社會階段的意義變化以及政府對貧窮的態度映射nation-building的過程，以及citizenship和labor之間建構起來的關係。有些例子寫得太詳細了，讀到中間講孤兒的一個我還紅了眼睛:(總的來說，Janet Chen是很有關懷的。

愿做太平犬，不做乱世人。基于档案、报纸的传统历史研究，但全书贯穿了十足的社会科学色彩。确实反映海外汉学研究新动向的好书。

一点和美国的对比观察：美国内战后兴起的针对乞丐流民的workhouse和involuntary labor有很强的市场机制和意识形态基础，操作者以exchange/contract等市场价值和观念来替自己的强迫劳动辩护，以区别于其时已经在理论上终结的奴隶制。但Chen这本书写到晚清以来的workhouse和强制劳动时，很多机构是直接处于penal administration的国家机关中，且为强制劳动辩护的理由是基于民族主义的将productivity纳入追求富强的现代citizenship的标准中，少有基于“市场”的内容。

被高估了

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