



Article

Divine Medicine: Healing and Charity Through Spirit-Writing in China

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Abstract: This study traces the evolution of religious healing practices associated with divine presence in China, from pre-modern traditions to the modern use of spirit-writing for obtaining divine prescriptions. It examines the continuity and transformation of these practices from the late imperial period to contemporary times. It argues that healing through divine prescriptions obtained via spirit-writing challenges the perceived dichotomy between religion and science, demonstrating that they have complementary roles, rather than being strictly opposing categories. For members of Jishenghui 濟生會, a lay Buddhist charity devoted to the Buddhist god Jigong 濟公 in Republican China, religion and scientific medical practice were integrated as complementary elements of daily life, combining doctrinal beliefs, ritual practices, and moral self-cultivation. This study examines how Jishenghui used spirit-writing to obtain and distribute divine prescriptions and medicines, demonstrating that the organization's philanthropic activities and social standing were enhanced by the integration of religious beliefs with medical and charitable practices during the Republican period. This study bridges existing research on the histories of spirit-writing and Chinese medicine, and the distinctions made between "Buddhist medicine" and "Daoist medicine". The article contends that, for ordinary people, no strict distinction existed between Buddhist and Daoist healing practices; instead, a shared religious culture regarding illness and healing was predominant. By contextualizing key analytical concepts such as "divine medicine", especially "divine prescriptions" (jifang 乩方 and xianfang 仙方) within the broader history of Chinese medicine and religious practices, this article demonstrates the social significance of spirit-writing as a ritual technique to provide healing and charity by lay Buddhists in Republican China, and its enduring relevance in contemporary Chinese societies.

Keywords: Buddhism; Daoism; spirit-writing; ritual healing; divine prescriptions 乩方; lay Buddhist charity; Jishenghui 濟生會; Jigong cult 濟公信仰; Republican China

1. Introduction

During the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, before the development of vaccines, an intriguing array of cures and medical prescriptions began circulating online within Chinese communities. These ranged from incantations and talismans to herbal medicine; some of which were prescribed by official institutions traditionally used for respiratory diseases. Among these, a notable case was the "Medical prescription of Bodhisattva Guanyin" 觀音菩薩藥方, which included not only herbal recipes but also exhortations for moral betterment and fasting, intertwined with dire warnings of divine retribution in apocalyptic scenarios. Such prescriptions trace back to texts such as "Divine prescription of Guanyin to save humanity from the apocalypse" 觀音大士救劫仙方, which was widely disseminated during epidemics in late imperial China. These medical recipes belong to a particular genre of Chinese medical prescriptions, known as "prescriptions received through spirit-writing" (jifang 乩方) or "prescriptions of immortality" (xianfang 仙方). The effectiveness of spirit-writing prescriptions is not to be understood through modern biomedical criteria but rather within the cultural and religious belief systems of the period. Healing, in this context, was seen as an interwoven process of religion, morality,



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and communal engagement. While these prescriptions reflect a distinct fusion of medical and religious practices, they also reveal the influence of religious traditions in addressing public health crises. What role did religious traditions, such as Buddhism or Daoism, play in shaping these unique forms of medical prescriptions during epidemics?

In recent years, scholars have made significant contributions to understand the intersection between religion and medicine in Asia. Several recent works have significantly advanced our knowledge of this complex relationship across different periods and cultural contexts (Salguero 2014a, 2014b, 2017, 2019, 2022; Lo et al. 2022; Stanley-Baker 2022, 2023). Salguero's work provides an overview of the state-of-art, noting the increased scholarly interest in the intersection of Buddhism and medicine (Salguero 2014a). He also emphasizes that Buddhists have consistently adopted proactive and practical approaches to address physical illnesses, offering practical advice for preventing and curing ailments within the religious framework for over two millennia. This pragmatic approach to healing was crucial in Buddhist proselytism in new regions, often being one of the primary benefits extended to new adherents.³

Several critical questions have emerged from these scholarly discussions. For instance, on the question of neologism, Salguero highlights that those modern references to "Buddhist medicine" are convenient but misleading, as they do not encapsulate a single, unchanging tradition. Instead, Buddhist medical practices have consistently evolved, adapting to local cultural and social contexts while remaining anchored in ancient Indian medical principles. This adaptation and transformation process, shaped by intersecting cultural, intellectual, and social realities, reflects the dynamic and non-static nature of Buddhist medicine across time and geography.⁴ Meanwhile, Michael Stanley-Baker also questions the neologism "Daoist medicine" (daojiao yixue 道教醫學), which he considers as anachronistic. He reviews earlier scholarship on the interrelation between Daoism, medicine, and healing; and calls for scholarly attention to the variety of processes by which the healing techniques later came to be known as Daoist (Stanley-Baker 2019). Thus, scholars start to agree that categories such as "Buddhist medicine" or "Daoist medicine" often become problematic or insufficient in scholarly discourse. In this context, Salguero's edited volumes, in particular, addressed the concept of "hybridity" in Buddhist healing in 2017;⁵ as did a section on "Crossing Boundaries" in 2019 (Salguero 2019, pp. 231-74). The contributors interrogate the category of "Buddhist medicine" by introducing healers and practices outside of a strictly defined Buddhist context, so that it becomes clear that the label "Buddhism" does not necessarily fit. To address the scholarly debate on the categories of "Buddhist medicine" and "Daoist medicine", it becomes necessary to interrogate the foundational assumptions underlying these classifications.

Indeed, the arbitrary separation of Buddhist or Daoist medicine as distinct fields does not align with the actual experience on the ground in the Chinese case. For example, DuBois' fieldwork reveals that for Chinese folk healers, the boundary between Buddhist and non-Buddhist ritual healing is irrelevant. One healer stated that he is unsure whether they are "Buddhist-style Daoists or Daoist-style Buddhists" and is not bothered by the contradiction (DuBois 2019, p. 240). As DuBois suggests, "Rather than dismiss such responses as demonstrating a lack of specialist sophistication, I suggest we take these explanations seriously as indicative of the contours of lived Buddhism". 7 By incorporating sources outside of Buddhist studies, we could have a more comprehensive view of some general characteristics of the interaction between religion and healing in China. For example, healing provided in non-Buddhist context has been studied by scholars in Daoist studies, who have shown how Daoists also actively incorporated popular healing techniques to serve the local population. Fang Ling's work on Quanzhen Daoism and ritual medicine has shown that the practice of "divination of the cause" (zhuyou 祝由), which includes healing practice through use of talismans, incantations, and exorcistic rituals have been incorporated in the official medical disciplines throughout Chinese dynasties, which are recognized as effective methods alongside other healing techniques (Fang 2013). Thus, these discussions

point to the need for a broader conceptual framework that transcends the limitations of existing categories such as "Buddhist medicine" or "Daoist medicine".

The second question to be addressed is the relation among various healing traditions in China. Indeed, the appeal of divine medicine is too great to be monopolized by one religion. Various religious traditions compete for reputation and aim to convert patients into their respective orders. We find constant opposition among various traditions claiming to be the most effective. For example, Dominic Steavu's recent article has highlighted the history of Confucian physicians distancing themselves from the magical elements of therapeutic practices. The tension between orthodox medicine and magic therapeutics has never been resolved. The contemporary coinage of so-called "traditional Chinese medicine" was only made rationally acceptable by removing its religious components, as part of a modernization process (Steavu 2017). However, the situation during the Republican period is much less understood. Beyond the discourses where different traditions wrote against each other, an important question arises: to what extent, if at all, did these competing religious and medical traditions find innovative ways to cooperate in the face of shared crises, such as epidemics and natural disasters?

The third question relates to the scarcity of scholarship on popular religious healing from late imperial to Republican China. Chen Ming has shown that, during the medieval period, Buddhist medicine and therapeutics were hugely successful, appreciated and valued by large number of Chinese people (Chen 2013). Outside of the context of institutionalized religions we know that, historically, access to physicians was extremely limited, and only a small, literate elite could document their practices, leaving popular religion largely unexamined. The recent chapter by the late Nathan Sivin discussed the discourses in which religion and medicine were negotiated from 600 to 1400 CE. However, as he posits upfront, "popular religion has been so little studied that a general exploration (which would necessarily include it) would be premature". Indeed, the mechanisms by which religious individuals continued to practice traditional medicine and ritual healing during anti-religious and anti-superstitious movements from the late imperial period to the Republican period are much less studied. Popular practices were dismissed as marginal or superstitious, and ignored for their community roots and significance. This also explains the lacuna in the study of Buddhism with spirit-writing, which was opposed by most Buddhist clergy but was remarkably popular among lay Buddhist circles in Republican China. Thus, it is essential to study religious healing at the popular level, where practices were neither strictly Buddhist nor Daoist, but formed a broader spectrum of healing rituals embedded in everyday life.

To fully capture the diversity of healing practices in Chinese society, and to recognize the fluid boundaries between religious traditions, we must examine key manifestations of healing that were employed in Chinese communities, without being confined to strict Buddhist or Daoist labels; considering them from a *long durée* perspective. In this framework, the concept of "divine medicine", as will be discussed in this article, could thus be considered a remarkable local manifestation of innovation in medical thought and practice in China. A more inclusive conceptual approach transcends the limitations of existing categories such as "Buddhist medicine" or "Daoist medicine", encompassing several domains of knowledge, such as ritual healing traditions, Buddhist healing god Jigong 濟公, Daoist ritual techniques such as spirit-writing, medical knowledge on compounding herbal medicines and healing through self-cultivation of morality. This article also aims to show the practical applications and societal impacts of divine medicine by examining how lay Buddhists in Republican China appropriated Daoist ritual techniques to produce and distribute these medicines during epidemics and disasters.

By doing so, this article thus seeks to address several questions raised by the late Nathan Sivin, as summarized by Michael Stanley-Baker in the introduction of this edited volume, "The first is whether or not we can take seriously the efficacy of spiritual therapy, and the utility of frameworks like Moerman's (2002) reframing of placebo as 'meaning response'. The second is what do we know, or can we know, about the varieties of religious

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curing. And the third is that, given that little was written down and that elite sources are prejudicial, what can we know about popular religion? How can we usefully compare written documents to ethnographic study?"¹⁰

First, as already mentioned above, this article introduces a distinctive form of religious healing which I refer to in this article using an etic term - "divine medicine" - which broadly refers to medicine, medical prescriptions, or healing provided by gods through spirit-writing. While there is not yet a dedicated study analyzing the influence of spiritwriting on Chinese medicine in Buddhist contexts, recent burgeoning scholarship on the history of spirit-writing in the Sinic world has allowed for an examination in this particular aspect (Goossaert 2022b; Schumann and Valussi 2023). A study by Luk Crystal Tsing-Tsing 陸晶晶, in particular, examined one medical book, *Yidao Huanyuan* 醫道還元—which is currently used in the teaching systems of 24 Chinese medicine universities in China—as an example, to show that spirit-writing has impacted the composition, compilation, and publication of Daoist medical books during the Qing dynasty; significantly contributing to the later development of Chinese medicine (Luk 2018). By closely examining the divine prescriptions found in the divination slips within popular household ritual books dedicated to the Stove God, such as the Jingzao quanshu 敬電全書, as discussed in Section 3, we gain a deeper understanding of the content, nature, and perceived efficacy of these remedies among common people. This analysis reveals how these texts served as practical guides for everyday healing, reflecting the integration of religious beliefs with medical knowledge in the lived experience of ordinary Chinese communities.

Second, by presenting a case study of Jishenghui 濟生會, a spirit-writing group which consists of lay Buddhists devoted to the Jigong cult in Republican China, this study aims to illustrate how spirit-writing contributed to healing practices by offering an alternative to conventional medical treatments, especially in times of crisis. While this study continues the existing scholarship on a healing practice in which aspects of Buddhism are combined with different kinds of non-Buddhist healing, I argue that in the case of Jishenghui in Republican China, both the healers (mediums receiving divine prescriptions) and practices (healing by spirit-writing) were hugely successful and popular. Contrary to the long-held belief that spirit-writing was merely superstitious (mixin 迷信), marginal, and insignificant, this practice wielded remarkable influence in Republican China, leaving an enduring legacy that persists to this day; as demonstrated by recent ethnographic fieldwork. Thus, this study offers the case study of Jishenghui to illustrate the scale and impact of their philanthropic activities, which were largely facilitated, promoted, and legitimized by their spirit-writing practices.

Third, to address Sivin's concern regarding the scarcity of sources studying the efficacy and understanding of popular religious healing—given the historical bias towards physicians' perspectives and the lack of accounts from the patients themselves—this article draws on four types of sources, which could help us to understand the history of divine medicine. First, ritual documents that prescribe the technique for invoking divine intervention to bestow divine medicines upon humans in medieval¹¹ and pre-modern China. They shed light on the ritualistic processes and religious frameworks underpinning the belief in divine medicine in China. We have specifically selected primary sources on the nature of divine medicine before the advent of divine prescription before the late imperial period, in Section 2. Second, the content of divine prescriptions received through spiritwriting in the late imperial period. By examining divine prescriptions and many other medical treatises, we can understand better the prescriptions' content and nature, and the perceived efficacy of these remedies among common people. This study thereby introduces a new perspective on the diversity of religious healing practices in China, enriching the scholarly discourse on medical practices at the popular level. Third, narrative accounts. These include critiques from observers and commentators in medical treatises and novels, discussed in Section 4. This is combined with firsthand narratives by mediums who received these divine prescriptions, discussed in Section 7. Sections 4 and 5 also give the contextual backgrounds of divine prescriptions; in particular, during epidemics which led

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to the Jigong cult in the modern period. We have examined gazetteers, archives, press articles, and contemporary accounts of Jishenghui's philanthropic activities in Sections 6–8. Last but not least, existing scholarship through ethnographic fieldwork, particularly with testimony from patients, also testifies the longevity of these practices in contemporary Chinese societies. By employing a historical analysis of these primary sources, combined with ethnographical data, this approach aligns with Sivin's call for a more comprehensive examination of what he refers to as "spiritual therapy", especially those popular practices often overlooked by elite literature.

2. From Divine Encounters to Ritualized Healing: The Pre-Modern Foundations of Divine Medicine

The history of divine medicine in China is deeply rooted within religious traditions and practices, with gods believed to offer healing elixirs. From early religious texts to the widespread cults of healing deities in the late imperial period, the notion that divine intervention could cure diseases has been a persistent theme. Meanwhile, according to legend, members of local cults and proto-Daoist organizations were experts in herbal medicine and provided healing to the local population. Most actors who played a role in the conceptualization of illness and healing in China were in fact also religious specialists. It was widely acknowledged that the ultimate elixir of longevity and immortality can be given only by gods themselves. One of the first gods in China to produce revelations and regularly intervene to guide humans was Laozi 老子, or Taishang laojun 太上老君 as he was known by his transcendent identity in the late Han dynasty. According to many medieval texts, the emergence of Heavenly Masters (tianshi 天師) was associated with the event of the visit by Taishang laojun to Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (34–156) in 142 CE (Goossaert 2022a). In the centuries that followed, Taishang laojun was attributed with the power to grant a divine elixir of longevity, as attested in Laojun yinsong jiejing 老君音誦誡經 (Goossaert 2022b, p. 35).

The ability to grant divine elixirs with healing properties gradually became integral to the standard repertoire of local gods. An eminent example is that of the gods of Maoshan 茅山, located in Jiangsu province, which has been the site of a series of revelations since the fourth century. The earliest mention of the major god in Maoshan—referred to as Lord Mao 茅君 in early texts—can be found in a divination book (*chenwei* 讖緯) called *Shangshu diyanqi* 尚書帝驗期 that may date to the Han dynasty (Goossaert and Berezkin 2012). In the text, Lord Mao is portrayed as seeking the secret to longevity from the Queen Mother of the West (xiwangmu 西王母). As the cult of Lord Mao began to develop in Maoshan, early hagiographies detail how pilgrims journeyed to venerate him in his temple. The healing ritual involved a divination process to foresee the progression of an illness. Visitors were required to first present ten eggs as offerings to the gods. Subsequently, they would learn about the potential outcome of their illness—whether it would improve or worsen—by interpreting the appearance of the egg yolk returned by the gods (Chang 2008, pp. 152–54).

Maoshan and its surrounding regions of Jiangnan served as the motor of religious innovations in the following centuries, most notably the emergence of the Shangqing 上清 order of Daoism. Shangqing texts from the fourth century offer detailed descriptions of effective minerals sourced from various regions of China, reflecting individualized approaches to treatment based on personal circumstances (Stanley-Baker et al. 2023). The famous Daoist patriarch, Tao Hongjing 陶宏景 (456–546), also wrote one of the most important medical book of his time, Bencao jing jizhu 本草經集註. ¹² As shown in a study by Michel Strickmann, techniques for healing emerged at the fourth and fifth centuries in this region; these involved the chanting of scriptures, ritual offerings, or the ritual use of seals and talismans, prominently but not exclusively within the Daoist tradition (Strickmann 2002; Strickmann 1990). Meanwhile, from its introduction in China during the late Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), Buddhism integrated Indian medical ideas with local practices, making Buddhist clerics both religious and medical specialists. This adaptability ensured the continued significance of Buddhist healing practices in various cultural contexts (Salguero and Macomber 2020, pp. 2–4). Buddhist therapeutic practices became vital in the medical landscape, alongside Daoist and traditional

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Chinese medicine. Buddhist texts promised health and well-being as karmic rewards, with rituals invoking healing deities such as Bhaisajyaguru (Ch. Yaoshifo 藥師佛) (Birnbaum 1989b; Birnbaum 1989a; Strickmann 1990; Shi 2020) and Avalokiteśvara (Ch. Guanshiyin 觀世音) (Yü 2001).

While religious specialists became the major intermediator between gods and humans, a direct "encounter" between gods and humans remains one of the most efficacious ways to attain healing. During the medieval period, healing was already closely linked with moral conduct. Franciscus Verellen has examined such accounts of divine interactions during the medieval period, particularly on those involving individuals who, by virtue of their moral and spiritual integrity, managed to engage with gods or immortals during the ninth and tenth centuries (Verellen 1998). He highlighted the occurrence of divine visions involving divine objects, including medicine. These are purported to appear in response to an individual's merits or exceptional qualities. These gifts could be presented directly by the divine entities, or practitioners might receive divine instructions guiding them to these sacred objects' locations.

With the advent of exorcist rituals (*daofa* 道法), healing became an essential function of Daoist rituals during the early modern period. In 955, possibly the earliest known record of spirit-writing appeared as a ritual for producing talismans and divine prescriptions (Goossaert 2022b, p. 174). Another case of healing through encounter with Taishang laojun appeared in a major text in thunder ritual traditions in the early eleventh century. ¹³ In this text, a leper offers himself as a serf to a monastery at Maoshan to serve the Daoists. As a reward for his selfless service, he is graced with an encounter with Taishang laojun and given a scripture to heal himself and others.

Various gods from the Buddhist and Daoist pantheon soon began to assume the role of healers. Healing remained one of the most important functions a local god could perform for its believers in the Northern Song period (960–1127). By the Southern Song (1127–1279) at the latest, various cults featuring spirit-writing that provided healing and granted medical prescriptions started to emerge. An early example was a practice referred to as "inviting [the deity] Zigu" (ying Zigu 迎紫姑). One of the aims of the practice was to receive transmitted medical prescriptions. One of the aims of the practiced at home but also in the community. For example, the cult of Hongen lingji zhenjun 洪恩靈濟真君 was based on temples offering ritual services from the resident Daoist priests, among which spirit-writing (for healing, divination, and exorcism) was central (Goossaert 2022b, p. 174). In the late imperial period, popular national deities such as Lord Guan 關公¹⁷ or local deities such as Yuhuang gongzhu 玉皇宫主 (Jade Princess) all assumed the role of healer for the local population.

With the expansion of the pantheon of healing gods, the practices surrounding divine medicine evolved significantly. Initially, healing involved spontaneous encounters with gods, where the sick would be healed in a moment of direct divine intervention. Over time, however, the process became more structured, shifting towards petitioning gods for ritualized healing. Take Chunyang dijun shenhua miaotongji 純陽帝君神化妙通紀,19 compiled by Miao Shanshi 苗善時 (fl.1324), for example. This collection of miraculous stories recounted several stories of sick people's encounters with Patriarch Lü 呂祖. This is representative of the change during the Tang-Song transition, as pointed out by Vincent Goossaert, that "during the early modern period, communication with Patriarch Lü and the other immortals was played out in the encounter mode, with the immortal appearing in flesh, or in dreams, or as a voice (Goossaert 2022b, p. 155)". What appears as a spontaneous healing through encounters with gods in the early modern period, which are largely attributed to the moral qualities of the patients, evolved into ritualized encounter in later periods. No later than eighteenth century, we can find local gazetteers with clear mention of "Spiritwritten prescriptions"(jifang 乩方). An example is found in the 1736 edition of Yunnan *tongzhi* 雲南通志, where locals sought divine prescriptions from local deities, as shown in the text below.

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Spirit-writing. In the early days of this current dynasty, Zheng Xiang from Jiangning, who was appointed as governor of Shiping county, was killed in a rebellion. Local people worshiped him. Through spirit-writing, he said that he had become the city god of the province. Whenever locals are ill, the divine prescriptions obtained from the spirit-writing were always effective. The local gentry, Xie, who writes talismans and dispenses medicines on Yanbei Mountain, providing a livelihood for local farmers. When the fields at the foot of the mountain suffered severe drought, through spirit-writing, Zheng gave directions to dig in a certain place. After digging, a spring did, indeed, appear which served to irrigate the fields.

降乩。本朝初,江寧人鄭相署石屏州,為叛將所殺。州人祀之。降乩云,為本州城隍之神。遇有疾者,乩方輒效。州紳謝君符築巖北山,為躬耕之計。山下田髙苦旱,鄭降乩指方向,鑿之果得泉以資灌溉。²⁰

With the evolution of the pantheon of healing gods and the practices associated with divine medicine, we see a significant shift from spontaneous encounters with gods to more ritualized forms of healing. The role of spirit-writing became central to these practices, allowing for the distribution of medical prescriptions within communities. This development was particularly significant given the limited access to formal healthcare across much of China. Most people turned to temples and religious specialists to cure illness. Consequently, temples in China historically functioned as regional medical centers, providing essential services for those in medical need. We will illustrate the ritualized presence of gods through divination for medical oracles and moral cultivation for healing purposes, both intimately related to spirit-writing, in the next section.

3. Medical Oracles and Moral Cultivation for Healing in Late Imperial China

Both the ritualized healing and the conceptualization of healing through moral improvements, were further developed and integrated during the modern period. While we are primarily concerned with prescriptions received through spirit-writing in this study, it is important to note that this is only one of the many healing practices used during the modern period. Given the limited access of the common people to physicians, simplified rituals such as spirit-written prescriptions and divination slips emerged as practical alternatives for healing. We observe the emergence of two religious innovations developed during the modern period. The first innovation is the invention of a ritual healing technique referred to as medical oracles (yaoqian 藥籤), a divinatory ritual to obtain medical prescription in the form of oracles—with its provenance in divinatory oracles—referred to as qian 籤²¹ in Chinese. The second is the discourse of healing through moral reform, most eloquently developed through the wide production and circulation of morality books (shanshu 善書), many of which themselves were produced through spirit-writing (Goossaert 2012). These two discourses developed independently; however, they soon hybridized into one coherent discourse on healing in the modern period.

Medical oracles usually come in the form of 100 poems. To understand their meaning, one usually needs to consult specialists. Some of the most popular revealed texts include a section of oracles, usually in the end of the book. While some contain only the divinatory poems, ²² others contain significant portions of commentaries which allow the literate to read and understand their oracles by themselves. The commentaries of divinatory oracles usually address all kinds of concerns possible, which include heath and illness; however, they are largely short summaries. Take oracles in the popular *Mingshengjing* 明聖經 for example; the very first, and most auspicious oracle simply says "Immediate recover from illness" (bing jiquan 病即痊).²³

The incorporation of divine prescriptions also attested in the "Quanshu canon"²⁴ when spirit-writing texts were compiled into complete anthologies. One early example was the 1775 edition of *Lüzu quanshu* 呂祖全書²⁵, compiled by Cai Laihe 蔡來鶴 (d.n.) and his disciple 邵志琳 (1748–1810).²⁶ Under the section titled *Zhibin xianfang jueyi qianshi* 治病仙方決疑籤詩 in *Juan* 57, we find 100 divine prescriptions and another 100 oracles.

In Shao Zhilin's preface,²⁷ he attributed the reception of these texts in the Ancient Lotus temple (gulian an 古蓮庵) in Jiaxing 嘉興 to the compassion of Patriarch Lü toward the people, which is said to be unparalleled other than in the case of Guanyin 觀音. For Shao Zhilin, these divine prescriptions with oracle poems are profound despite them being brief and short, and even the illiterate could understand their meaning. Patriarch Lü's own preface, titled "Admonishments to physicians" (jieshang yishi yan 戒飭醫士言) explains to his disciples who aspire to provide a healing practice to the people that the reason why one cannot blindly follow classical medical recipes is because the ancients were pure and sincere, while many contemporary people are wicked and mean, which is why some classical recipes will not work. Patriarch Lü is also critical of professional physicians who only treat physical maladies, but not the morality of the people. Patriarch Lü particularly used the analogy that using medicine is like military conflicts. Using simple recipes could cure the people, just like a smaller number of soldiers could win a war, if used strategically. Indeed, we find most of the 100 divine prescriptions from Patriarch Lü extremely brief, with one or two herbal ingredients and the method of preparation; each prescription is one to two lines in length. From time to time, the divine prescriptions indicate no herbal ingredients, but call for cultic devotion or moral exhortations. After the section on divine prescriptions, the text is followed by a "talisman to suppress ghosts from Mount Tai" (Taishan yagui fu 泰山壓鬼符), then 100 oracle poems, titled "divination poems for resolving doubts" (*jue yi* qian shi 決疑籤詩). These oracle poems have a title of four characters and follow the structure of four verses with seven syllabus each, without commentary. At the end of 100 poems, we find a postface explaining that the oracles are Patriarch Lü's way of sympathizing with the ignorance of people, thus revealing the oracles to indicate orientation. The way to conduct the divinatory ritual was also explained in great detail, with a format of petition to Patriarch Lü provided. The requesters must fill in their name, address, and the reason for requesting oracles on the petition, and specify whether they are asking for the divine prescription or oracle poems. The requesters must keep to a vegetarian diet and precepts, and show devotion before the patriarch. They will offer incense and prostrate themselves before the gods, burn the petition and then proceed to obtain the oracles. It is prohibited to request oracles relating to trivial matters or to request multiple oracles continuously.

Another related text, Lüzu zhenjing lingqian xianfang hebian 呂袓真經靈簽仙方合編,²⁸ indicates clearly in the preface that this anthology was revealed to a spirit-writing altar by Lüzu due to his sympathy to the sufferings in the human world. Whenever sincere patients come to ask for help from Lüzu, they must read the scriptures three times before making any demands. The texts emphasize that the divine prescription given by Lüzu will be most efficacious. The texts followed include an autobiography by Lüzu (Lüzu zixu zhuan 呂祖自序傳), followed by a series of incantations (zhou 咒) and short moral tracts prohibiting the killing of animals and respecting written characters (xizi 惜字).²⁹ The upper limit for the dating of the preface could only be after sixteenth century, as it made reference to the popular Wenchang dijun yinzhi wen 文昌帝君陰騭文 and the Buddhist monk Lianchi Zhuhong 莲池袾宏 (1535-1615), when advocating for respecting lives and releasing animals. While the preface was in the form of a manuscript, the pages that followed were printed; including ten rules to ask for divine prescriptions (qiufang shize 求方十則). It was followed by 100 short phrases under the title "Lüzu Oracles" (Lüzu lingqian 呂祖靈籤). The section for divine prescriptions constitutes about half of the content of this anthology, with 100 prescriptions each for men, women, and children of external medicine (waike 外科), and 53 prescriptions for ophthalmology (yanke 眼科).

Another important *Quanshu* compendium which includes medical oracles is the *Jingzao quanshu* 敬竜全書, published in Shanghai in 1868.³⁰ This text plays a crucial role in the current study, as it provides a concrete example of divine prescriptions received through spirit-writing; reflecting popular medical practices deeply integrated into everyday life. As a widely popular household devotional text, *Jingzao quanshu* illustrates how religious healing was not confined to religious or temple settings, but was part of daily domestic rituals. Here we have two sets of oracles: the general oracles and the medical oracles. There are 50 general oracles;

each starts with one of the five general level of assessment of the situation (best, better, neutral, worse, worst), followed by a short comment to 12 categories of possible questions asked, i.e., home, health, bureaucratic career, tombs, marriage, family members, birth, import, sell, trade, money, lost property. The medical oracles under the section are referred to "Divine prescriptions of Stove God". It is divided into 50 oracles for internal medicine (neike 內科) and another 50 for external medicine (waike 外科). The medical oracles usually start with a medical recipe, composed of their ingredients, quantity, method of preparation, and frequency of intake. Each prescription is then followed by a short commentary, usually a miraculous story which attests either the efficacy received by other patients, or the punishments for the patients who did not follow the divine prescriptions.

However, a close reading of all these divine prescriptions reveals the intentions of the compilers behind these divine prescriptions beyond the cure. While divine prescriptions could be considered traditional medical recipes in the form of oracles, however, these texts exhibit features beyond mere medical prescription. Qian Quchun 錢椰春 (d.u.) was mentioned twice in these oracles (with his literary name Qian Shengrui 錢聖瑞 in oracle no.30 and no.80). In the first mention, Qian's son got sick, and only after he printed large quantities of the *Jingzao quanshu* did he obtain a prescription for the recovery of his son. In the second mention, Qian contributed a miraculous story about two prostitutes' lamenting of their hellish lives, despite their father and uncle being famous physicians. They got sick and were then cured by the prescription given by the Stove God.

Several remarks could be made on these divine prescriptions for us to understand better the content, nature, and perceived efficacy of divine prescriptions. First, we find the majority of these prescriptions, including messages of exhortation for values and behaviours as advocated in the morality books at the time. This approach represents an innovative strategy to leverage the widespread appeal of morality books, thereby enhancing the dissemination and reach of the divine prescriptions by aligning them with values and behaviors espoused in those popular texts. Many prescriptions involve making vows toward a prohibition of certain taboo foods, such as beef, dogs, frogs, and eels. While many meat-eaters will be prescribed long-term vegetarianism as a cure, however, Buddhist nuns or monks are prescribed meat and pig's lungs as cures. The stories particularly noted their initial resistance to following the prescription, and being healed of their maladies when they finally abided. Meritorious acts are also prescribed; for example, to stop killing and start liberating the animals (fangsheng 放生), patronizing the printing of more copies of these texts. Indeed, these texts are impossible to pigeonhole into either Buddhist or Daoist motivations, as not only do they call for a patronage of printing more copies of the Jinzao quanshu itself, but also the Buddhist Heart Sutra and Guanyin oracles. Printing large quantities of flyers with calendars of fasting of Thunder gods (leizhai dan 雷齋單) could be meritorious, as they call for devotional acts toward a diversity of gods, not only toward Stove God, but also to chant the name of Amitābha. They are equally prescribed to recite the popular morality text *Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇 and the scriptures and litanies of Stove God 竈君經懺.

Second, the texts reveal a significant geographical concentration in the Jiangnan region, particularly in Shanghai, and detail the societal conditions in which these practices flourished. This information provides valuable context, indicating that divine prescriptions, which later became central to Jishenghui's activities, were already popular and widely circulated in Shanghai before the organization's emergence. That been said, we also note a heighted societal mobility indicated in these texts, involving travelers passing through Shanghai, businessmen working between Shanghai and their home province (Suzhou, Huzhou, Fujian). The Stove God particularly exhorts them to bring the text back to their hometown, facilitating the spread of these texts.

The patients in these stories come from all kinds of backgrounds, and many have a profession. The miraculous stories address individuals such as commoners, scholars, businessmen, a beef butcher, Buddhist monks, and nuns (never Daoist), a fortune-teller in slip 96, a master of physiognomy (bian xiang 辦相) in slip 64, or glyphomancy (cezi xiansheng

測字先生) in slip 100; prostitutes, opium smokers, and urban physicians. The relations between several protagonists could be neighborly or familial. The short stories often take dramatic turns in a few lines, with pairs described as having two opposite outcomes, despite following the same divine prescription, due to one of them later being revealed as a beef eater in slip 70. One of the most classic stories was that the protagonists were often described as either ignorant or reluctant to seek help from Stove God, only to be exhorted by the advice of their friends when they did obtain the divine prescriptions and were cured.

Third, a significant proportion of the prescriptions diverged from those of professional physicians, revealing a notable tension between Confucian medical practitioners and popular religious healers who relied on divine medicine. This conflict highlights the ongoing debates and competition between different healing traditions in China. Divine prescriptions (xianfang 仙方) were quite different from the, presumably common, medical prescriptions (yifang 醫方), with many miraculous stories starting by saying patients resorted to divine prescriptions only after the failure of common prescriptions and much suffering, as there are really few capable physicians 方知良醫竟少 in slip 95. Confucian physicians were not always portrayed in a positive light. They were described as "having eyes but missing the point" (youyan wuzhu 有眼無珠) in slip 75. In this story, the said Shanghainese obtained the divine prescription but did not have the courage to take it. He went to consult "vulgar physicians" (suyi 俗醫) for a second opinion instead and was prescribed a recipe with more than 20 ingredients, which led to his death. The evident tension between the urban physicians and religious healers reflected in these texts arise due to the diverging incentives of providing medical treatments. Many miraculous stories include discourse directly against such physicians (yi 醫); at times referring to them as "vulgar physicians" or "professionals of external medicine" (waike jia 外科家) in slip 81. They are described as stolen prescriptions and healing techniques. They are often rich, while still being greedy for more profits, at times fighting among themselves. They treat bureaucrats and the rich as a priority and often neglect the poor. The physicians themselves also got sick but even their own prescriptions were inefficacious. They could only be cured after praying to and obtaining divine prescriptions from the Stove God. When the physicians learned of their recovery, they were also impressed with the efficacy of the Stove God, wondering "how could it be so if it's not the divine prescription?" 非仙方安能如此 in slip 92. It was spelled out quite unambiguously, that "seeking a physician is not as good as seeking the Stove God" 求醫不如求竈 in slip 89, yet it appears that some texts assumed that some patients would only request the divine prescriptions in secret 暗求in slip 84.

In terms of the discourse on healing through moral improvement, one such morality book is *Qisheng dan* 起生丹 published in 1901³¹ from which Jigong descended frequently to give instructions at the spirit-writing altar Qingyuntan 青雲壇 in Beijing (Fan and Wang 1996). Medical prescriptions entered the genre of morality books no later than the eighteenth century. One notable example is the expanded edition of *Zengding jinxin lu* 增訂敬信錄.³² The 1797 edition features medical prescriptions, which are included in the latter sections of the book (Goossaert 2022b, p. 197), indicating the integration of medical practices within the moral discourse of these texts.

From the late imperial period, a large number of morality books were produced during an apocalyptic framework with the background of war, natural disasters, or epidemics. The medical prescriptions produced under such circumstances include morality texts titled "prescription of immortality" (xianfang 仙方). One such example is an undated medical prescription, titled Guanyin pusa jiujie xianfang 觀音菩薩救劫仙方³³, is part of a text titled Guanyin quanshan wen 觀音勸善文. The actual prescription comes at the later part of the text, which reads:

...In front of us now is a great apocalypse, the rich and the poor are treated the same. The third, sixth, and ninth months bring disasters; epidemics spread, transmitting disease. Every household cannot escape the calamity; dysentery, plague, and fevers add up. If you catch a disease, it may last a year and a half; even extraordinary medicine struggles to cure the suffering. Evil people will eventu-

ally receive their retribution, and good people each have their own rewards in heaven. Common people, heed my guidance; I have divine prescriptions to rescue those in dire need. On the first and fifteenth days, recite the scriptures; on the nineteenth of the second month, burn paper money. On the nineteenth of the sixth month, set up an incense table, each family burns incense in gratitude to heaven. On the nineteenth of the ninth month, when good deeds are fulfilled, the Bodhisattva will naturally come to guide those with affinity...

…眼前就是大劫現,富貴貧賤是一般,三六九月有災難,瘟疫流行把症傳,家家戶戶劫難免,痢疾瘟疫加傷寒,染病即有一年半,妙藥難醫病中冤,惡人到頭終有報,善人各有一重天,凡民得我來指點,吾有仙方救燃眉,初一十五把經念,二月十九化紙錢,六月十九排香案,一家焚香答謝天,九月十九功德滿,自有菩薩來渡緣…

The integration of medical oracles and moral cultivation into the healing practices of the modern period reflects a significant evolution in the relationship between religion and medicine in China. While medical oracles provided divinatory guidance for obtaining divine prescriptions, moral cultivation emphasized the role of ethical behavior in achieving and maintaining health. These practices often intersected, creating a discourse on healing that combined physical and moral dimensions. The analysis of prescriptions from this period reveals that they were often aligned with values and behaviors that originated in popular morality books, indicating an innovative strategy to enhance their dissemination. Furthermore, the geographical concentration and societal condition of the miraculous stories provide a valuable social and medical context, indicating that such practices were already popular in Shanghai before the emergence of charities such as Jishenghui. However, the practice of seeking divine prescriptions through spirit-writing also faced challenges and criticisms. It is necessary to mention them before examining how these methods evolved in response to opposition and changing societal attitudes.

4. Oppositions and Evolution of Divine Prescriptions

Despite its popularity, the practice of seeking divine prescriptions through spirit-writing faced opposition and skepticism. Criticisms focused on the unorthodox nature of some prescriptions and the dangers of relying on spirits for medical advice. However, the practice persisted, adapting to changing societal attitudes and continuing to offer a spiritual complement to conventional medicine.

The popularity of divine prescriptions could be evidenced from their depictions in popular novels. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the way to receive "divine prescriptions" appeared to be subject to meeting the right person, access to whom was limited to the most privileged. The pursuit and accessibility of divine prescriptions gradually entered the discourse of prestigious families in the late imperial period. What remains stable lies in the fact that such divine prescriptions were sought after, as they are usually perceived as the only viable option when all traditional methods failed.

In the famous eighteenth century novel *The Dream of the Red Chamber* 紅樓夢³⁴, when the two protagonists Jia Baoyu 賈寶玉 and Wang Xifeng 王熙鳳 were taken ill by sorcery, the family tried various approaches: sending off ghosts by rituals 送祟, possessions by spirit-mediums 跳神, exorcism by Daoists, prayers and medicine, all to no avail. When a Buddhist monk and a Daoist priest arrived to their rescue, the head of family Jia Zheng 賈政 explained the situation as such: "Yes, two members of the family are bewitched. Have you perhaps some miraculous remedy? 有兩個人中了邪,不知有何仙方可治?"³⁵ The chapter concluded by the pair exorcized the jade from birth of Jia Baoyu, with two protagonists turning for the better.

In the late sixteenth century novel A Journey to the West 西遊記 (earliest edition 1592), it includes the following episode.

When the king heard this memorial, he was both frightened and angered. "This means", said he to the royal father-in-law, "that Heaven wants to destroy us! We

have been sick for months, and the imperial physician has been wholly ineffectual. It was fortunate that the royal father-in-law has bestowed on us a divine prescription. We were just waiting for the noon hour today to lift the knife and take out these boys' hearts and use them as our medical supplement. How could they all be swept away by a gust of cold wind? What explanation could there be other than that Heaven wanted to destroy us?"³⁶

國王聞奏,又驚又惱,對國丈道:「此事乃天滅朕也。連月病重,御醫無效,幸國丈賜仙方,專待今日午時開刀,取此小兒心肝作引,何期被冷風刮去,非天欲滅朕而何?」 37

The mentioning of the court physicians (yuyi 御醫) in the emperor's pursuit of divine prescriptions indicated that their views on the divine prescriptions received through spirit-writing might have played a role in the discourse about the subject matter. One such text, written by Xu Dachun 徐大椿 (1693–1771), one of the most renowned physicians from Jiangnan during the Qianlong 乾隆 period (1736–1795). In his Yixue yuanliu lun 醫學源流論 (preface 1757)³⁹, we find a text titled "Treatise on the divine prescriptions" 乩方論, in which Xu writes:

On the topic of divine prescriptions, there are those in the world who write talismans to invite immortals' presence and to request medical prescriptions. Some of these prescriptions are indeed shallow, crude, unorthodox, ineffective, and even misleading. However, there are also those which are profound, ancient, remarkable, and solid, possessing miraculous efficacy when used for healing. The immortals (providing the prescription) might claim to be Lü Chunyang or Zhang Zhongjing, making the prescription seem akin to the therapeutic methods left by Chunyang and Zhongjing. This phenomenon is rather strange and yet has its logical aspects. After all, spirit-writing (ji 乩) is about opportune moment (ji 機). The call from people's heart can reach anywhere. If one sincerely seeks healing, there must be spirits or deities capable of healing who will respond. While they might not genuinely be Chunyang or Zhongjing, they could be those from the past who were wise in medical principals but died before their time. Their spirits, not yet dissipated, roam between heaven and earth, appearing in response to the call to demonstrate their ability. When the patient recovers as expected, it's considered a fortunate meeting (with the spirits) has happened. This, too, has its own logic. While the prescriptions might not be entirely effective, they carry essential meanings. This contrasts with modern physicians, who often use contradictory medicines that harm people, and at crucial moments of life and death, they are reluctant to say things with certainty, this is because heavenly secrets cannot be leaked out so easily. As for the prescriptions that are unintelligible and unorthodox, they are likely the result of unskilled spirit-writing or insincere patients, and (these prescriptions) cannot be considered genuine divine prescriptions.

乱方論,世有書符請仙而求方者,其所書之方固有極淺、極陋、極不典,而不能治病且誤人者。亦有極高、極古、極奇、極穩,以之治病而神效者。其仙或托名吕純陽,或托名張仲景,其方亦宛然純陽、仲景之遺法。此其事甚奇然,亦有理焉。夫乩者機也,人心之感召,無所不通,即誠心於求治,則必有能治病之鬼神應之。雖非真純陽、仲景,必先世之明於醫理,不遇於時而死者,其精靈一時不散,遊行於天地之間,因感而至,以顯其能,而其人病適當愈,則獲遇之。此亦有其理也。其方未必盡效,然皆必有意義,反不若世之時醫,用相反之藥以害人,惟決死生之處,不肯鑿鑿言之,此則天機不輕洩之故也。至於不通、不典之方,則必持乩之術不工,或病家之心不誠,非真乩方也。

Another such work is *Huisheng ji* 回生集 by Chen Jie 陳杰 (fl. 1789).⁴⁰ In the preface dated 1789, Chen Jie discusses the effectiveness of divine prescriptions received through spirit-writing and emphasizes the importance of careful application in medical treatment, as in the following.

Exquisite remedies have often been passed down from immortals, such as those found in the "Thousand Gold Prescriptions", which are particularly renowned. I myself have long suffered from phlegm disease, and later, my left knee developed a cold pain that did not heal despite numerous treatments over twenty years. In the year of Wushen [1788], I respectfully set up a spirit-writing altar to seek a cure, and the ancestral master, Ge Xianweng [Ge Hong], through the spirit-writing, indicated that this knee pain was caused by accumulated phlegm. Fortunately, he bestowed a medical prescription that quickly eliminated the longstanding illness. Since then, whenever my family members have been ill, we have earnestly prayed for prescriptions from the immortals, and all have been effectively cured. However, since the ancestral master treats illnesses based on the individual, the obtained spirit-medium prescriptions have not been widely disseminated. My only wish has been to thoroughly search among the people for proven effective prescriptions, regardless of whether they have been previously engraved (on woodblocks), and publish them for the public. Still fearing that among the compiled prescriptions, some may only work temporarily and should not be considered infallible, I respectfully requested the ancestral master to select, resulting in over four hundred prescriptions. The spirit-writing also stated that I possess a heart dedicated to aiding the world; hence, for all requests made, the spirit-writing was used to guide me. Nowadays if someone has a collection of effective prescriptions ready and ask me for a selection, I would also be happy (to accept such requests). However, as illnesses vary in deficiency or excess, cold or heat, and medicines differ in warming, cooling, tonifying, and reducing properties. Deficiency requires warming and tonifying, excess needs purging and dispersing. If one does not accurately diagnose the condition and mistakenly administers medication, the consequences can be serious. By choosing those prescriptions that are sure to be effective, there will undoubtedly be no failures. Therefore, this book is aptly named The Collection for revitalization. Respectfully narrated in the introduction, to embody the ancestral master's compassionate heart for universally relieving suffering.

從來妙劑,多出仙傳,如千金等方,其尤著者也。余素患有痰疾,後又左膝寒痛, 廿載以來,屢治不瘥。戊申歲恭設乩壇求治,葛仙翁祖師乩示云,此膝痛即係積 痰所致。幸賜方藥,宿疾頓除。嗣凡眷屬有恙,即虔禱仙方,無不立效,但祖師 因人治病,故所得乩方,未敢廣傳。惟立願遍訪世間經驗良方,無論已刻未刻, 彙刊公世。尚恐成方中,或有一時偶驗,未可永為準則者,謹求祖師選定,得四 百餘方。並蒙乩批雲,予有一片濟世之心,故凡有所求,借乩鸞以示爾。今備有 成方,請予選定,予亦欣然。但病有虛實寒熱,藥有溫涼補伐。虛宜溫補,實宜 瀉散。倘視症未明,誤投藥劑,為害非輕。今擇其必中者用之,自無不驗也。此 書即定為回生集可耳。敬敘卷首,以體祖師普濟之慈心雲。41

When a Jiangsu literati-official Xu Zonggan 徐宗幹 (1796–1866, *jinshi* 1820), returned to his hometown Tongzhou for his mother's funeral in 1843, he collected a series of local anecdotes into a collection titled *Elu zaji* 惡盧雜記, ⁴² two of the anecdotes related to spirit-written prescriptions in Jiangsu area at the time.

[Anecdote 1] In the city of Tongzhou, the divine prescriptions from the Huawang Temple are highly efficacious, known in Sichuan as the "Medical oracles of Transendant Hua", and are revered and kept in homes. Recently, it is possible to obtain medical prescriptions through spirit-writing in the temple in Tongzhou, with many prescriptions beginning with mentions of "When so-and-so descended in the altar of Master Dongheng.⁴³" A couplet in the temple reads: "The eternal regret of not splitting Cao Cao's skull; the fleeting fame for treating Guan Yu's arm". The widely circulated stories are expansions from the original narratives, unaware that both the *History of the Later Han* and the *Records of Wei* contain detailed biographies and de-

scriptions of these prescription methods. Thus, a volume has been compiled and printed for distribution, with the preface entered into the anthology of literature.

通郡城中華王廟仙方極靈驗,蜀中稱華真人簽方,供奉於家。近日通郡廟中可扶 乩開方,方首必書某某在東垣先生降壇時居多。廟中聯語有:「未劈曹顱千古恨, 曾醫關臂一時名」之句。世所傳稱者,皆衍義所載,不知後漢書及魏史均有本傳, 所記方術甚詳。爰輯為一卷,序而梓行;傳序入文錄。44

[Anecdote 2] The Feng family from Tongzhou, devotees of an altar known as "The Immortal's Altar", have been ceaselessly approached by those suffering from illnesses, seeking medical prescriptions through spirit-writing, often witnessing miraculous occurrences. Most astonishingly, there have been times when one or two medicinal pills would fall from the air above the altar. Those who took these pills were cured immediately. Some doubted and suspected deceit, however, upon investigation, the origin of these pills remained a mystery, and it was found that the host family was not known for using tricks to dazzle others.

州後馮姓,供有「有仙壇」,因疾求乩方者不絕,輒著靈異。尤奇者,有時壇間空中墜藥丸一、二粒,病者服之即瘥。或疑其偽,然訪究之,實不知所自來,且主人並非以術炫者。⁴⁵

Another medical treatise *Lenglu yihua* 冷塵醫話 (preface 1858) by Lu Yitian 陸以 <math> 活 46 (1802–1865, *jinshi* 1836), a Zhejiang literati who published a few works on medicine, critiques the practice of using spirit-written prescriptions 乩方 for medical treatment, highlighting its unreliability and potential dangers. Lu writes:

Caution on [using] Medicines: The trend of spirit-written prescriptions is particularly popular nowadays. How could immortals be treating human illnesses? In reality, they are mostly just spirits or ghosts, hence the outcomes are hit or miss. Among the cases I have personally witnessed: In the capital, Zhang Ziya suffered from chills and fever. A spirit-written prescription included ginseng and astragalus, but it led to phlegm obstruction and his death. In Xiaoshan, Li Yixuan, who was elderly and suffered from paralysis of the legs. The spirit-written prescription uses *Aconitum*, *Rehmannia glutinosa*, *Hansenia weberbaueriana*, and *Asarum sieboldii* among others, resulting in a fatal loss of blood. Those who are deceived by this practice argue that if it works, it is due to the efficacy of the immortals; if not, they claim that the person was destined to die, and the immortals merely facilitated their end. Alas! Is this even worth discussing? Medicine is meant to preserve life, but it can also harm life. Those who take it must exercise great caution.

慎藥

乩方之風,於今尤甚。神仙豈為人治病,大率皆靈鬼耳,故有驗有不驗。餘所目擊者,都門章子雅患寒熱,乩方用人參黃耆,痰塞而殞。蕭山李儀軒,老年足痿,乩方用附子、熟地、羌活、細辛等味,失血而亡。彼惑於是者,效則謂仙之靈,不效則謂其人當死,乃假手於仙以斃之也。噫!是尚可與言乎?藥以養生,亦以傷生,服食者最宜慎之。47

This opposition against divine medicines continues in the 1930s, when the practice of publishing divine prescriptions as addendum to popular texts must adapt to the changing atmosphere of the time. Due to the anti-superstition movements in urban centres at the time, the divine prescriptions were published under sections which appear more secular. One such example is the *Zhuzi shanding yuquan zhenben taoyuan mingsheng jing* 朱子刪定玉泉真本桃園明聖經, ⁴⁸ published in Shanghai in 1939. For the content list, we find the title which is now referred to as "Medical prescriptions through experience"經驗藥方. The priority of the time appears to be epidemics such as cholera and plague. The list of prescriptions was arranged by classical departments, such as internal, external, women, children.

While the practice of divine prescriptions has historically faced criticisms and challenges from professional physicians exercising outside of religious settings, these texts re-

flect the tensions between the two different views on the human body and etiology of illness, reflected in their distinct healing practices. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the practice of spirit-writing and divine prescriptions must evolve within the changing landscape of Chinese medicine and society.

5. Historical Context: Epidemics and the Emergence of the Jigong Cult

Disasters such as epidemics have historically played a crucial role in the veneration of new deities and the evolution of their cults in the late imperial period. For example, the revelation from the Patriarch of Great Peak during the 1898 rat plague, ⁴⁹ Lord Guan during the epidemic in 1912⁵⁰ and Master Ming, who gave out free medicine to save more people. ⁵¹ The belief in the growing healing efficacy of Chinese gods by the local population would explain the growing popularity of certain local cults. A significant shift was observed in the late Ming dynasty in the way revelations were presented in spirit-writing texts (Goossaert 2022b, chap. 6). During the early modern period, these revelations were usually exclusively addressed to initiated members of spirit-writing groups. However, this period saw a change in audience, with revelations starting to be addressed to the public, indicating that spirit-writing groups began to engage more broadly with the local population.

The number of spirit-written prescriptions surged during the nineteenth century, corresponding to the height of epidemics outbreaks, especially in the regions of South China, including Guangzhou 廣州 and Hongkong 香港. According to the statistics of Lai Wen 賴文 and Li Yongchen 李永宸, there were 645 records of epidemics outbreaks during the period of 1875 to 1911, averaging 2.92 outbreaks per year during 1875–1899 and 5.3 outbreaks per year during 1900–1911. In this context, medical emergencies made the option of going to temples, monasteries, and charitable halls to seek healing untenable for the locals without other means. Recent scholarship through historical study and fieldwork has shown that medical oracles have been practiced until this day in many parts of the Chinese world, and historically it has been particularly popular in southern coastal provinces such as Fuzhou 福州 (Schumann and Valussi 2023, pp. 334–35). This practice could also be closely related to charitable institutions such as *shantang* 善堂, where pharmacies for traditional Chinese medicines have been an integral part. Sa

When epidemics spread further to the Jiangnan region, we find some gazetteers of individual shantang charities provided an untapped source for the activities of these charities and the role spirit-writing played in it. For example, the Pujitang 普濟堂 in Gaochun 高淳 in the south of Nanjing published in 1900 a large gazetteer⁵⁴ detailing their activities and their intense spirit-writing communications with the gods.⁵⁵ Providing healing to the locals is one of the major functions of Pujitang, with the last section titled "Divine prescriptions for universal relief" 濟世神方 in the gazetteer dedicated to a collection of divine prescriptions revealed by various gods, such as Wang Dadi 汪大帝, Xu Dadi 許大帝, Zhong Liquan 鍾離權, Patriarch Lü 純陽祖師 (or Fuyou dijun 孚佑帝君), Transendant Zhang 張真人, Patriarch Hua 華祖師. Most of the divine prescriptions were received through spirit-writing in Pujitang, but some were likely collected from different channels; for example, one mentioned "this prescription was sent from *shantang* in other provinces". These prescriptions addressed various illnesses, but many mentioned terms related to contagious diseases, such as sha 痧 and wen 瘟. The prescriptions are referred to by names such as puji wan 普濟丸, bao'an dan 保安丹, biwen san 辟瘟散, which we find in sources describing the medicine given out by Jishenghui.

One important piece of textual evidence associating epidemics with an emerging Buddhist healing god Jigong 濟公 (d. 1209) is *Wen da tianjun shouwen jiangfu baochan* 溫大天君收瘟降福實懺,⁵⁶ a spirit-written litany published in 1891 in Jingyi tan 敬一壇, Zhejiang province, for the ritual expelling of epidemics dedicated to Marshal Wen 溫元帥.⁵⁷ In the preface, Jigong explains the etiology of epidemics as being caused by evil ghosts who wants to bring down people with wicked minds with them. Rituals such as litanies of repentance would be able to allow the sinners to improve their morality and then evade the evil ghosts.

Jigong is the legendary Chan monk from the Song dynasty, known for his eccentric behavior, including drinking wine, eating meat, and other actions running against the traditional Buddhist monasticism (Shahar 1998). Despite his contentious relationship with the Buddhist establishment, Jigong's life and miracles became the subject of various literary and dramatic works over the centuries during the Ming and Qing periods. Lore about Jigong is often saturated with humor and miraculous stories, making him a beloved character in both narrative stories and especially spirit-writing circles, which emerged from the late Ming dynasty and thrived during the late Qing and early Republican era.

Jigong's efficacy in providing healing circulated in the Jiangnan region, and his cult saw significant expansion partly due to the efficacious medical prescriptions purportedly received through spirit-writing, a practice that gained prominence during these tumultuous times.⁵⁹ In fact, the expansion of spirit-writing groups can be directly attributed to the fact that the leaders of such groups have been often healed by medical prescriptions received from the gods.⁶⁰ The cases of new members being initiated into a religious order due to being healed by religious specialists seems particularly abundant in the Jiangnan region. Min Yide 閔一得 (1749–1836), who was cured by Quanzhen Daoist in Tiantai mountain 天台山 during childhood, later became the founder of the Jin'gaishan 金蓋山 network, which provides healing and other ritual service to the locals. The Jin'gaishan network is intimately associated with the local Jigong network, which also adopted a double identity, worshipping both Patriarch Lü and Jigong since the late nineteenth century (Goossaert 2021).

Another compelling case related to the Jigong cult is that of Falun 法輪 (fl. 1875), whose childhood healing, attributed to a divine prescription from Jigong via spirit-writing, profoundly influenced his later life. As a Buddhist monk at Dinghui Temple 定慧寺, where Jigong's tomb is located, Falun not only strengthened ties with spirit-writing altars, but also actively promoted the Jigong cult, significantly contributing to its regional expansion. 61

6. The Religiosity and Charity of Jishenghui in Republican Periods

The Republican era witnessed profound social transformations, with new social entities—ranging from local community associations to organized religious societies—stepping in to fill the gaps left by weakened state institutions, particularly in response to frequent crises such as famines, floods, and epidemics. A notable aspect of this transformation was the native adaptation to the Christian model of social engagement in philanthropy. By 1937, over 300 Christian missionary hospitals had been established, some of which actively proselytized while providing medical care. This vigorous Christian engagement spurred members of local elites to participate in charity as Buddhists or Confucians, both in imitation of and in contrast to Christian initiatives (Goossaert and Palmer 2011, pp. 78–79). One of these emergent charities was the Shanghai-based Chinese Society for the Relief of Sentient Beings (Shanghai zhongguo jishenghui 上海中國濟生會), established in 1916 (Wang 2008).

The range of charitable activities of Jishenghui was remarkably vast. Its endeavors included offering diverse ritual services, often free of charge. The organization also engaged in punctual acts of philanthropy, stepping in during times of natural disasters to offer crucial relief, such as food, clothing, medicine, and coffins to the affected. Jishenghui took on the responsibility of establishing and managing key institutions, including clinics, hospitals, soup kitchens, orphanages, and temples, serving both the immediate and long-term needs of local society during times of crisis. The success of Jishenghui not only attracted numerous social elites and prominent lay Buddhists at the time such as Wang Yiting Ξ — Ξ (Wang Zhen Ξ Ξ , 1867–1938) to participate and lead their diverse charitable activities in the early twentieth century, but also simultaneously propagated the Jigong cult through their philanthropy activities.

Jishenghui serves as a prominent example of a hybrid institution of philanthropy and religious practices in addressing the era's challenges. Not all activities of Jishenghui were conducted in a religious context, and all associations such as Jishenghui have every reason to make themselves appear modern, secular, philanthropy-oriented rather than faith-oriented, especially for those operating in the social context after 1898 (Goossaert 2006).

However, existing work has shown that the origins of Jishenghui are closely linked to the ligong ${\rm cult.}^{66}$

One unique aspect of Jishenghui's activities involved spirit-writing sessions, during which its members received divine revelations from Jigong. These revelations guided their multi-faceted philanthropic work during periods of crises, illustrating how religious practices were integral to their mission. Wang Chien-chuan 王見川 has shown that both their spirit-writing altar called Jiyunxuan 集雲軒 and their philanthropy association, Jishenghui, are but the two sides of the same coin, having their origins in two particular spirit-writing altars of Jigong: Hengji tan 恒濟壇 in Fuyang 富陽, Zhejiang province and Yongji tan 永濟壇 in Wushan 吳山, Hangzhou 杭州. 67 According to Meir Shahar, the first time when Jigong descended in spirit-writing sessions was during the Boxer revolt around 1900 (Shahar 1998, p. 186). Other than the influence of novels and opera, spirit-writing groups were crucial in promoting the popularity of Jigong worship. By the 1930s, Jigong had become a major deity for spirit-writing within the redemptive society Yiguandao.⁶⁸ Today, Jigong continues to descend through spirit-writing to provide healing to the local population, most notably in contemporary Hongkong.⁶⁹ In some spirit-writing halls in Taiwan, a majority of concerns from worshippers centered around health, followed by career or else (Katz 2023, p. 618). The divine prescriptions, in their current form, are merely divine water, referred to as cinnabar water (danshui 丹水), talisman water (fushui 符水), or exorcist water (fashui 法水); most often, flower tea. 70 The earlier form of the divine water could have been an infused water or tea with ashes from burned talismans (Katz 2023, p. 618).

These spirit-writing altars of Jigong should be understood in the long history of spirit-writing as a ritual technique to receive divine revelations. Early instances of spirit-writing could be attested to the Song dynasty, and it is considered as a religious technique for a person or a community to communicate with gods, with the aim of seeking response to personal requests, access healing, or moral guidance as means to achieve self-divinization (Schumann and Valussi 2023, p. 1). Many of the spirit-writing groups, including the Jigong cult, developed charitable halls (shantang 善堂) dedicated to charitable acts toward the public from the late Ming onwards (Fuma 1997; Liang 1997; Smith 2009). The concept of serving for the benefit the public was a recurring theme in many modern spirit-writing revelations and formed a core part of these groups' activities (Yau 2005; Goossaert 2022b, pp. 214–16). The concept of serving the public good through charity and healing practices, often revealed through spirit-writing, underscores a significant aspect of Jishenghui's identity (Schumann and Valussi 2023, pp. 9–10).

7. Transmission of Knowledge: Spirit-Writers with Medical Expertise

In terms of healing, in many cases, several key members of these groups were persons with significant medical knowledge, or even trained physicians. They employed a range of methods in their healing practice. Some offered medical consultations, while others performed healing rituals such as exorcism, talisman incantations, and spirit-writing sessions, where medical prescriptions were revealed by the gods. This practice was used to help individuals and particularly on a larger scale during epidemic outbreaks. For instance, during the 1894 bubonic plague epidemic in Canton, spirit-writing played a critical role in facilitating the growth of large spirit-writing altars (Yau 2011; Shiga 2010).

Not only were some physicians themselves wielders in spirit-writing altars, they actively trained the next generation of wielders in private homes. One such narrative source, written by Bao Tianxiao 包天笑 (1879–1973), described a widespread presence of two forms of spirit-writing altars, predominantly dedicated to Patriarch Lü and Jigong, in Suzhou during the late Qing dynasty. These altars were set up in public spaces such as charitable halls, as well as private homes. They were places where the sons of literati families were taught to become wielders-cum-mediums and to interpret the divine prescriptions received through spirit-writing.

In Bao's memory, the spirit-writing altar in his home usually takes three persons to conduct a séance, two persons holding the stylus to write in the sand pan, while the third

person writes down the characters as they appear in the sand. Because one of Bao's uncle's being sick often and the family being unwilling to recruit outsiders, Bao was recruited by another uncle to be the recorder (*lu lun* 錄論) of the spirit-written texts. Bao was unsure of himself at the beginning; however, he was assured by his uncle that the characters would mostly be simple ones and even if mistakes were made, it could be corrected afterwards. During the training, Bao was given a spirit-written text from Jigong to read and rehearse. Bao participated in the séance immediately on the second day, kneeing on a table next to the spirit-writing altar, he writes all that appeared in the sand with a brush onto a notebook. Half an hour later, the séance was finished. Bao's first attempt was quite successful, with only two three characters needing to be corrected. However, Bao acknowledges that it was much more difficult to ask for medicinal prescriptions:

However, I faced some difficulties while seeking the "divine prescriptions", as I wasn't familiar with some of the names of the medicines and ended up making typos. But my uncle Yannong is knowledgeable in medicine. He has always studied medical principles. When prescriptions were being given at the spirit-writing altar, he gave detailed instructions and checked carefully, making the process go smoothly.

不過在求"仙方"中,我較為困難,因為有些藥名,我不熟悉,寫了別字。但硯農 表叔是知醫的人,他一向研究醫理,乩壇上臨開方子,他更詳細指示,謹慎檢點, 也就順利進行了。⁷¹

A survey of the currently available medicinal slips seems to suggest that the Chinese gods prescribe what most village physicians would prescribe for their patients. This is not surprising considering that, in fact, many of the wielders of spirit-writing altars which provide healing service are actually physicians themselves. The identities of such wielders are rarely explicit in the early modern periods. However, we have much more data in many localities for the late imperial period and the twentieth century and can assume that the tradition of appointing physicians, or at least persons with medical knowledge, to the role of wielder was one of the necessities of providing healing services of spirit-writing altars. For example, Lou Dexian 婁德先 (1592–1645) in Liu-han Altar 了閒壇⁷² and Wu Shoushuo 吳寿頤 (d.u.) in Shanqing jingtang 善慶經堂, were both physicians-cumwielders in spirit-writing altars.

The first physicians-cum-wielders for receiving divine prescription at Jigong spirit-writing altar of Jishenghui is highly likely Bu Zhangwu 步章五 (1874–1933) (Zhang 2014, p. 184). Hailing from Henan, Bu Zhangwu was an exemplary literati (*juren* 1903) in the last decade of Qing dynasty. He worked for a time under Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916) until 1915, when Yuan proclaimed himself the emperor. Bu expressed his opposition by leaving the Yuan court, and moving south to settle in Shanghai, together with his friend Yuan Kewen 袁克文 (1890–1931), son of Yuan Shikai. They were said to be hosted in the house of Jiyunxuan 集雲軒-cum-Jishenghui starting from this period, which coincides with the founding of Jiyunxuan in 1915 and Jishenghui in 1916.⁷⁴ The roles played by both men in these groups were only hinted at, if not intentionally blurred in existing public records. Neither of the two men was listed on the 1918 official member list of Jiyunxuan.⁷⁵ Bu Zhangwu was only mentioned in a list of elected employees, one of the three responsible for an auditing department (shenheke 審核科) of Jishenghui in a press article on *Shenbao* in 1920.⁷⁶ Yuan Kewen was even more discrete about his being a "disciple of Jigong", which we learnt only from the reference from mourners on his funeral in 1931.⁷⁷

However, Bu Zhangwu's involvement in the spirit-writing sessions of Jiyunxuan-cum-Jishenghui is clear. If recording the Jigong poems through spirit-writing was only a private pastime, ⁷⁸ Bu Zhangwu started to make good use of his medical knowledge to provide healing service to the public for free. Following the operation models of other popular charitable halls, such as Renji shantang 仁濟善堂, founded in late nineteenth century, ⁷⁹ the distribution of medicines (shiyao 施藥) featured a prominent role among the charita-

ble activities of Jishenghui, operated by a specific branch "medicine distribution outlet" (shiyao chu 施藥處).⁸⁰

8. Disaster Relief Efforts by Jishenghui

When Chen Runfu 陳潤夫 (1841–1919), the first chief of Jishenghui passed away, Wang Yiting took charge and brought with him wealth of first-hand experience working for other philanthropic groups (Shen 2011, pp. 103–6). In 1920, Jishenghui made a public advertisement on the first page of the popular Shanghai newspaper, *Shenbao*, in which they did not shy away from disclosing publicly that the provenance of the medicines from Jishenghui were through spirit-writing. The advertisement says:

Each summer, in accordance with the medicinal prescription received through spirit-writing, various cinnabar pills were specially prepared to provide timely relief and to cure epidemics, offered for free to both locals and those from other regions for emergency use. Their miraculous efficacy was well-established, and no charges were incurred. If philanthropists come forward to Jishenghui with donations to collect medicines to give away [to the people], the association will produce and distribute these medicines according to the prescription, thus broadening the charitable merits.

每屆夏令,特遵乩方配製應時濟生救疫各種丹丸,爲本埠及外埠施贈,救急之用,神效久著,概不取資。如慈善家備欵到會,領藥施送者,本會可照製本撥藥,以廣善緣。⁸¹

The spirit-writing flavor of these medicines could be attested from earlier mentions of such medicine names before 1920, when "Immortal merits" Pujidan 仙功普濟丹 and "Immortal merits" Pujishui 仙功普濟水 were distributed to the poor during the epidemics in 1919.⁸² Such divine medicines were given out as charity at least throughout the 1920s. Again, in 1923, we found the same 1920 advertisement for such cinnabar preparations were again put on the front page of *Shenbao* four times from May 24th to the 30th.⁸³ Such an intensive advertising campaign worked on two fronts, first at promoting the efficacy of the medicine from Jishenghui, second at soliciting funds to mass produce their medicine and, in turn, their influence nationwide. In 1924, Wang Yiting wrote in praise of the generosity of one such donor.⁸⁴

During the period of the Central Plains War 中原大戰 from the late 1920s, Jishenghui distributed large quantities of medicines to the disaster area in Qufu 曲阜 in Shandong province, including a few cinnabars: Baoandan 保安丹, Jishengdan 濟生丹, and liquids: Pujishui 普濟水 and Jishengshui 濟生水, ⁸⁵ at times with campaigns led by Wang Yiting himself. ⁸⁶ Many of the cinnabars produced by Jishenghui are multi-purpose. Take Baoandan 保安丹 for example. Not only were these sent to the disaster-striken areas, they were also said to cure febrile seizures in children. ⁸⁷ We can learn of the extremely popular reception of these various medicines produced by Jishenghui from a 1931 newspaper article, which reads:

The Chinese Society for the Relief of Sentient Beings (Zhongguo jisheng hui 中國濟生會) has recently received letters from Yu Zhusheng 余柱笙 and Zhou Jingfu 周敬甫, the directors of relief activities in Tianjin and Beijing, who report multiple times that as we enter summer, epidemics have broken out and are widespread in areas such as Rehe and Chaoyang in the northern province. The villages lack good doctors and pharmacies, and many disaster-stricken residents succumb to their illnesses. In addition, the displaced refugees from Henan need to carry medicines to prevent epidemics when passing through stations like Tianjin and Beijing. The esteemed association previously sent 20,000 bottles of jishengdan 濟生丹 and 1000 boxes of baoandan 保安丹, both highly effective and life-saving medicines. However, due to the vast disaster area, distribution has been uneven and supplies are nearly exhausted, hence, an increase in aid is requested. The association recently shipped another 10,000 bottles of jishengdan from Tongzhou ship, and the Taishun

ship sent 20,000 bottles of shidishui 十滴水. Still, there are insufficient supplies to distribute, so we plan to send another 20,000 bottles of jishengdan soon to meet the urgent needs. The medicines from the association are effective and valuable. Now, Beijing and Rehe provinces have sent a total of 70,000 bottles of Jishengdan and Shidishui. The cost of the medicines is considerable. If people from all walks of life and philanthropists could generously contribute to the medication fund to produce more aid, the disaster victims could gain relief, and such acts of benevolence and beneficence would indeed be boundless.

中國濟生會,頃接天津、北平等處辦振主任余君柱笙、周君敬甫,迭次來函報告,以北省熱河、朝陽等災區,現當入夏,疫病發生,隨處皆是。鄉間既乏良醫,又無良好藥舖,災民每染病症,恒多坐以待斃。又加河南出關難民,經過平津等車站,各須帶藥,以防疫病。前蒙貴會寄來濟生丹二萬瓶,保安丹一千盒,皆屬非常靈效,有起死回生之功。但災區太廣,施散不周,近已用罄,仍乞增加濟用。該會前日通州輪又寄上濟生丹一萬瓶,泰順輪寄上十滴水二萬瓶,現接來函,仍屬不敷分布,擬日內再寄濟生丹二萬瓶,以應急需。該會藥既靈效,藥本珍貴,今北平熱河兩省已寄濟生丹、十滴水共七萬瓶,成本不資。各界慈善大家,如能樂助藥資,多製救濟,則災民咸登壽口,種德造福,實無涯涘矣。88

Two different approaches for healing existed in parallel in Jishenghui before 1933. One was certainly divine prescriptions received through spirit-writing. After Bu Zhangwu passed away in 1933, Jishenghui started to downplay the aspect of divine prescriptions received through spirit-writing, but rather started to advocate for the new healing methods, referred to as "spiritual operations for healing" (jingshen shoushu zhibin 精神手術治病). This approach was explained in a postface written by Qiu Wenqing 邱問淸 collected in the *lishi tayuan zhi* 濟師塔院志 in 1939.⁸⁹ In this text, Qiu Wenging exclaimed that the "spiritual science" (jingshenxue 精神學) was the synonym for the healing ritual of "Healing methods using fingers as needles combined with samadhi and five thunder rites" (sanmei wulei zhizhen zhi zhifa 三昧五雷指針之治法). Qiu's method of "spiritual healing" was taught by his master Zhu Qicheng 朱棄塵 (1871–?), a senior member in both the spirit-writing altar Jiyunxuan and philanthropy group Jishenghui. However, we only learnt of this transmission and the specifics of this healing ritual through sparse sources. Both Zhu Qicheng and Qiu Wenqing featured prominently in another major endeavor of repair and reconstruction of Yuxuguan 玉虛觀, a Daoist monastery near Nanjing, in 1936.⁹⁰ Zhu not only took a leading role in the reconstruction project, but also planned for an additional construction of a temple for Jigong (jigong foyuan 濟公佛院) on the same site. During the fundraising campaign, Zhu Qichen was the most active and successful collector of donations, raising more than a third of the total funds.

The clinic in Jishenghui organized separate consultation days for men and women, likely to avoid the free mingling of different genders, which would lead to labels of superstition. By all appearance, Jishenghui clinic is a modern scientific medical institution, conducting smallpox vaccinations twice a year during spring and autumn. Nonetheless, the practice of producing cinnabar has not stopped. They distribute various kinds of medicines year-round for the benefit of the sick and needy. For example, when noticing a high prevalence of poor health among women in the country, they made a special medicine for women called "jishi desheng dan 濟世得生丹". ⁹¹ In contrast with the 1920 advertisement, where it was particularly emphasized that "the medicine was made according to divine prescription received through spirit-writing", here in the 1936 advertisement the provenance of the medicine was not mentioned at all. ⁹² With spiritual healing being one of the accepted scientific methods, the Jishenghui clinic appears modern and secular. The press article says:

The Jishenghui traditionally provides spiritual healing. It is stipulated that men are treated every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, while women are treated every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, with no consultation fees. Additionally, smallpox vaccines are administered in the spring and autumn, and vari-

ous medicines are dispensed year-round to benefit the sick. Reflecting on the fact that a majority of women in our country suffer from ill health, the common causes are sadness, depression, and anger, resulting in symptoms such as chest tightness, abdominal distention, back pain, waist soreness, and menstrual disorders. Consequently, many children born to these women are weak. As winter has now arrived, there are many impoverished women in society who are unable to seek medical attention. The Society has specially produced a gynaecological medicine, Jisheng desheng dan, which primarily regulates the liver, soothes the qi, nourishes the blood, and adjusts menstruation. It effectively treats symptoms such as rising heat phlegm, qi obstruction, limb numbness, pre and postpartum conditions, and menstrual loss of blood. Any patient can obtain this medicine from the Society's location in the International Settlement on Ningbo road, Gujia alley, free of charge.

中國濟生會向有精神手術治病。規定每逢星期一、三、五診男,星期二、四、六診女,一律不收診費。並於春秋兩季施種牛痘,以及常年施送各種藥品,以惠病者。復鑒於我國婦女身體失於健康居其多數,其原因每以悲戚、憂鬱、忿怒,致成胸悶、腹脹、背痛、腰痠、經期失調等症。遂致所產兒女恒多羸弱。茲者冬令已至,社會中貧苦婦女、無力求醫者比比皆是。該會爰特製送婦科要藥濟世得生丹一種,專治婦女種種危險症候以平肝舒氣養血調經為主。主治熱痰上湧、氣阻晋迷、四肢風麻、胎前產後、停經失血等症,頗著功效。凡有患者,可向公共租界寗波路顧家弄該會素取,不取分文。93

Jishenghui also invented new medicine during the cholera crisis in 1930s, as we can see from the following press article:

Jishenghui donates medicine to help disaster victims. Two hundred bottles of the newly invented Jishadan 急痧丹. Jishenghui recently invented and formulated a special paste for the corners of the eyes, Jisha jiuming dan 急痧救命丹, to treat cholera. It's very effective. Whoever gets cholera, apply this medicine to the corners of the eyes. After application, tears will flow and the eyes will feel painful, while limbs become numb and cold. The medicinal properties immediately reach the dantian 丹田, and the cholera can be cured. If the eyes do not hurt after application, then it is not cholera. However, this medicine must not be taken orally. A single bottle of this medicine can treat three to four people, applied two to three times every two minutes, until the patient's limbs are no longer numb or cold and the body is comfortable. Consequently, the Society donated this medicine to various charitable organizations in Shanghai yesterday, contributing two hundred bottles to the Northeastern Refugee Relief Union (dongbei nanmin lianhehui 東北難民聯合會), to be forwarded to the regular representatives of these charitable organizations, Qu Yingguang 屈映光, Feng Yangshan 馮仰山, for distribution and trial use among the sick in disaster-stricken areas. It is reported that the Society will soon send this medicine to the post office for distribution in plain letters.

濟生會捐送藥品救災民,新發明急痧丹二百瓶。中國濟生會,最近新發明配製點 眼角急痧救命丹治痧症,非常有效。凡遇急痧者,將此藥點於四眼角,點後出淚, 眼覺甚痛,四肢麻木發冷,藥性即直達丹田,症即可愈。若點眼不痛,即非痧症, 惟不可入口。此丹一瓶可治三四人,每兩分鐘點二三次,至病人四肢不麻不冷, 肢體舒服為度。故該會於昨日將此項藥品捐送上海各慈善團體賑濟東北難民聯合 會二百瓶,請轉致各善團駐平常董屈映光馮仰山二氏,分濟災區病黎試用。 聞該會即將該項藥品,交郵局寄平散放云。94

In 1933, they sent Yushu dan Ξ 樞丹 to the disaster areas, in the article, it was specifically mentioned that it was "home-made medicine" (zizhi zhi yaopin 自製之藥品). ⁹⁵ The name for the medicine Yushu Ξ 樞 draws on *Yushu jing* Ξ 樞經, a fundamental scripture written through spirit-writing and used in the cult of Puhua tianzun 普化天尊 for thunder rituals. At times of utter urgency, such as flooding, Jishenghui will send all the variety of

medicines in their disposal: jishengdan 濟生丹, shishasan 時痧散, medicine for dysentery 痢疾藥, shidishui 十滴水, rendan 人丹, baoandan 保安丹, lingbaodan 靈寶丹. 96

In sum, during the late 1920s and 1930s, Jishenghui played a crucial role in disaster relief, distributing large quantities of medicines to areas affected by war and epidemics. Led by Wang Yiting, they provided multi-purpose medicinal pills and holy waters, which were highly effective and well received. Despite shifting from divine prescriptions to "spiritual healing", Jishenghui continued to innovate and produce new medicines. Their clinic offered free consultations, smallpox vaccinations, and year-round medicine distribution, demonstrating a modern and pragmatic approach to public health during a tumultuous period in Republican China.

9. Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, this study proposes a new framework for understanding the interaction between religion and medicine in China, emphasizing the roles of healing gods, healers, rituals, and its contemporary relevance, through ethnographic fieldwork.

First, this study underscores the significance of healing gods and their divine presence in ritual healing practices in China. While previous scholarship has concentrated on well-known figures such as the Medicine Buddha Bhaisajyaguru (yaoshi rulai 薬師如来), Avalokiteśvara (guanshiyin 觀世音/Kannon 観音), and Mañjuśri (wenshu pusa 文殊菩薩), this research highlights Jigong 濟公 as an important Buddhist healing deity among lay Buddhists from the late imperial period to the present. The findings align with earlier work by Strickmann (Strickmann 2002) and Yü Junfang (Yü 2001), which showed that in Chinese popular religion, the transformative adaptations of these deities in local contexts often outweigh their original textual or iconographic forms. Jigong, originally a historical Buddhist monk, evolved into a prominent healing god by the late imperial period; exemplifying the later stage of sinification process of Buddhism in China. This evolution highlighted the need for further scholarly exploration of Jigong's role and significance, not only to deepen our understanding of religious adaptation in Chinese history but also to illuminate the broader processes through which Buddhism was reinterpreted and integrated into local popular practices.

Second, the case study of Jishenghui demonstrates the organization's enduring commitment to healthcare provision and medicine distribution across diverse regions of China, even amid challenging socio-political climates. Despite prevailing anti-superstition campaigns in Republican China, Jishenghui maintained its credibility and trustworthiness, as reflected in public endorsements and advertisements. This reflects broader historical dynamics, where traditional healing practices were adapted to meet contemporary needs, whether voluntarily or under societal pressure. It is important to note that ritual healing was not the sole approach adopted by Jishenghui. Rather, figures like Wang Yiting epitomized the elite of the time, who were simultaneously faithful to their inherited religious culture and pragmatically open to modern medical practices and innovations. Wang Yiting's expertise in organizational management, media engagement, and extensive social networks was crucial to sustaining philanthropic efforts such as those of Jishenghui during the tumultuous period of Republican China, when their philanthropic work in societal welfare and healthcare was urgently needed by the common people.

Third, this study reveals the critical role of spirit-writing as a ritual technique to invoke divine presence and obtain medical prescriptions. The practice of obtaining medical prescriptions through spirit-writing should be understood within the broader context of religious healing rituals and their historical evolution. This practice exemplifies the integration of local traditions into Buddhist healing practices, enriching the studies of the history of religions and medicine in China. While existing research often highlights the twentieth century as a period of significant modernization and secularization in Chinese medicine, this study shows how Buddhist individuals such as Wang Yiting and institutions like Jishenghui navigated modernity in the early twentieth century. These divine prescriptions were widely disseminated by religious institutions such as spirit-writing altars and

charity halls, which facilitated their acceptance and utilization across various communities. Within this network, organizations such as Jishenghui emerged as vital agents of healing and philanthropy in Republican China. Their development was closely linked to the established network of spirit-writing altars, practitioners with medical expertise, and support from social elites, institutions and general public, illustrating a unique aspect of the intersection between religion and medicine in this historical context.

Fourth, this study explores the fluid boundaries between Buddhist and Daoist healing practices. While competition between these traditions is frequently emphasized, this study reveals more complex dynamics. It shows that Buddhist figures such as Wang Yiting adopted Daoist methods to further their philanthropic and self-cultivation goals, bridging gaps between religious and medical practices in Republican China. Meanwhile, two conceptions of illness and healing prevalent in contemporary societies can be traced back to their medieval religious origins. First, many individuals turn to religious healing only after conventional medicine fail—a pattern observed since the late imperial period until today—and, second, in contemporary China, illnesses are sometimes perceived as moral failings, with cures involving repentance and atonement, reflecting traditions from medieval and late imperial periods. Notably, these two beliefs are shared across both Buddhist and Daoist traditions, demonstrating a convergence in their approaches to healing. The persistence of these beliefs and practices also serves as a remarkable living testimony to the resilience of religious frameworks in shaping perceptions of health and disease even in modern, scientifically oriented contexts.

Finally, the history of revelation in Chinese society over the past two millennia presents a marked contrast to societies of Abrahamic traditions, where monotheistic traditions often limit revelations. The distinctive cultural context of Chinese societies, with its rich history of spirit-writing, offers a unique case for examining how divine prescriptions are woven into everyday life and medical practices. The emergence of Jishenghui, linked to regional epidemics, parallels developments in other cultures, such as Japan, where the Medicine Buddha's cult rose in popularity during the Heian period (794-1185) amid devastating epidemics (Yiengpruksawan 1996). A comparative study involving pluralistic societies such as India could also open new dimensions of understanding (Weiss 2009). Thus, this study's findings on divine prescriptions in Chinese society not only adds a case study to the broader dialogue in comparative religions, but also invites us to reconsider the very nature of healing, faith, and communal resilience in the face of crises. When faced with epidemics and suffering, historical figures in China were not less rational or more "superstitious" than we are today; rather, they turned to their gods and rituals, finding in their worldview the same courage and hope that modern society seeks through science and reason—illustrating that the fundamental essence of humanity remains consistent, across time and space.

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Abbreviations

DZ: Daozang 道藏, numbers following Schipper and Verellen (2004), eds., The Taoist Canon. GDZ: Daozang jicheng diwuji Guandi juan 道藏集成第五輯關帝卷, numbers following "CRTA—The Chinese Religious Text Authority 宗教書籍規範索引"(https://crta.info/) (accessed 17 August 2024).

Notes

- 1 Guanyin dashi jiujie xianfang 觀音大士救劫仙方, or Guanyin pusa jiujie xianfang 觀音菩薩救劫仙方, anonymous, undated. Available online: http://taolibrary.com/category/category/67/c67002.htm (accessed on 13 August 2024). See also several texts titled Guanyin dashi jiujie xianfang 觀音大士救劫仙方 in vol. 7 and vol. 9 of Zhongguo yuyan jiujie shu 中國預言救劫書. Wang Chien-ch'uan 王見川, Song Jun 宋軍, Fan Chun-wu 范純武, comp. Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 2010, 10 vols.
- In this paper, I combine the emic terms jifang 出方 (prescriptions through spirit-writing) and xianfang 仙方 (prescriptions of immortality) as an etic term, "divine prescription". This term encompasses both types of prescriptions—referring to medical prescriptions, herbal recipes, and methods of cures received through the ritual technique of spirit-writing—which have appeared since the twelfth century. The term "prescription" is also more inclusive than "recipe" in the sense that our study reveals some divine cures in China involve self-cultivation through moral behaviors and the accumulation of merits, extending beyond mere medicinal formulations. Stanley-Baker et al. (2023) give the following definition: "prescriptions, refers to recipes prescribed outside of an explicit context of cultivation, which focuses specifically on curing disease. These were prescribed as a form of clinical response in which samples and compounds were chosen for their suitability to treat specific disease conditions. These prescriptive texts served people in their wider social network and addressed entirely pragmatic concerns". At times, I also use an etic term "divine medicine" to refer to medicine or cures associated with other ritual healing practices, which were not necessarily derived through spirit-writing. This term covers medicine or cures before the emergence of divine prescriptions or those obtained from contexts not explicitly associated with spirit-writing.
- ³ Salguero, Buddhism and Medicine, xxi.
- ⁴ Salguero, xxii; (Salguero 2019, p. xvi).
- ⁵ Salguero, Buddhism and Medicine, 431–530.
- ⁶ Salguero, xxi.
- ⁷ DuBois, 236.
- 8 I follow the translation of zhuyou 祝由 by Andrew Schonebaum in a recent publication, see (Schonebaum 2022, p. 473).
- ⁹ (Sivin 2023); See also "Introduction" by Michael Stanley-Baker.
- 10 (Stanley-Baker 2023), Introduction.
- In this paper, I follow the scholarly convention of using the term "medieval" to describe the period of Chinese history from the second to the tenth centuries CE. This term has gained acceptance in recent scholarship to denote a time of political fragmentation, the rise of regional powers, and significant cultural and religious transformations, particularly in Daoism and Buddhism. See (Verellen 2019, pp. 12–13).
- See a recent critical edition of *Bencao jing jizhu* by Wang Jiakui 王家葵 (2023).
- Goossaert, 75
- Goldschmidt, The Evolution of Chinese Medicine; Sivin, Health Care in Eleventh-Century China, 95–6, 102–3.
- Boltz, "On the Legacy of Zigu and a Manual of Spirit-writing in Her Name"; Valussi, "Women, Goddesses, and Gender Affinity in Spirit-Writing".
- Wang Chien-Chuan 王見川, "Spirit-Writing Practices from the Song to Ming Periods and Their Relation to Politics and Religion", 93.
- Shiga, "The Nineteenth-Century Spirit-Writing Movement and the Transformation of Local Religion in Western Guangdong", 512–13.
- ¹⁸ Shiga, 521–23.
- ¹⁹ DZ 305.
- 20 Yunnan tongzhi 雲南通志, 30.38a.
- Written as its homophone *qian* + in certain manuscripts.
- Guandi mingsheng zhenjing zhujie 關帝明聖真經注解, Daozang jicheng diwuji Guandi juan, vol. 21, pp. 521–640.
- Guan di ming sheng jing zhu shi 關帝明聖經注釋, Daozang jicheng diwuji Guandi juan, vol. 21, pp. 123-342.

- Goossaert, "Spirit Writing, Canonization, and the Rise of Divine Saviors: Wenchang, Lüzu, and Guandi, 1700–1858".
- Yin Zhihua 尹志華, "Lüzu Quanshu de Bianzuan He Zengji"《呂祖全書》的編纂和增輯"; Lai Chi-tim 黎志添, "Qingdai Sizhong Lüzu Quanshu Yu Lüzu Fuji Daotan de Guanxi" 清代四種《呂祖全書》與呂祖扶乩道壇的關係".
- 26 Goossaert, "Shao Zhilin 邵志琳 (1748–1810), a Religious Life".
- ²⁷ Shao Zhilin, Lüzu quanshu, juan 57, 941a.
- 28 Lüzu zhenjing lingqian xianfang hebian 呂祖真經靈簽仙方合編. see: http://taolibrary.com/category/category62/c62050.htm (accessed on 13 August 2024).
- I should like to thank an anonymous reviewer's suggestion to further investigate the apparent contradiction between the practice of cherishing characters (xizi 惜字), which emphasizes respecting written characters, and the healing tradition that involves burning talismans (fu 符) and feeding the ashes to patients. This dichotomy, though seemingly contradictory, can be understood through their distinct roles and historical contexts in Chinese culture. The practice of xizi reflects a reverence for the written word, rooted in the belief that written characters carry knowledge and intrinsic value, which underscores the importance of literacy and the moral duty to treat written characters with respect. Conversely, the use of talismans in healing rituals is grounded in the belief that talismans possess divine power and can invoke divine intervention for healing purposes. The distinction lies in the intended audience and purpose of the writing: while zi primarily communicates with humans, fu primarily communicates with gods.
- Jingzao quanshu 敬電全書 in Sandong shiyi, Volume 11, pp. 626–693. I am grateful to Vincent Goossaert for introducing and discussing this text on his seminars. For a study on the Zaojun 電君 (the stove god or the kitchen god), also known as Zaoshen 電神, Zao Wangye 電王爺, see (Chard 1990).
- 31 Qisheng dan 起生丹 in Zangwai daoshu 藏外道書. Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1992–1994, vol. 28.
- Zeng ding jing xin lu 增訂敬信錄, 1797 edition at Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessible online: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark://12148/btv1b90065479?rk=21459;2 (accessed 15 August 2024).
- Guanyin pusa jiujie xianfang 觀音菩薩救劫仙方, anonymous, undated. Available online: http://taolibrary.com/category/category6 7/c67002.htm (accessed 13 August 2024) See also several texts titled Guanyin dashi jiujie xianfang 觀音大士救劫仙方 in vol. 7 and vol. 9 of Zhongguo yuyan jiujie shu 中國預言救劫書. Wang Chien-ch'uan 王見川, Song Jun 宋軍, Fan Chun-wu 范純武, comp. Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 2010, 10 vols.
- 34 Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹. Chongjiao bajia pingpi Honglou meng 重校八家評批紅樓夢. Chapter 25.
- English translation from Cao Xueqin (Tsap Hsueh-Chin) 曹雪芹 and Gao E (Kap Ngo) 高鹗, A Dream of Red Mansions, 1:p.369. Corresponding original text in Chinese available online: https://ctext.org/hongloumeng/ch25 (see section 33, accessed on 17 August 2024).
- ³⁶ (Wu 2012), vol. 4, chap. 78, Translated and Edited by Anthony C. Yu.
- Corresponding original text in Chinese available online https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E8%A5%BF%E9%81%8A%E8%A8%98/%E7%AC%AC078%E5%9B%9E (accessed on 17 August 2024).
- In 1760, Grand Secretariat 大學士 Jiang Pu 蔣溥 (1708–1761), serving under Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (1711–1799, r. 1735–1796), fell ill. The Emperor launched a nation-wide search for physicians, leading to the selection of Xu Dachun from Jiangnan as the primary choice. Upon examination, Xu honestly conveyed to the Emperor that nothing further could be done for Jiang's condition. The Emperor, appreciating Xu's candor, sought to retain him at court, but Xu requested and received permission to return home. Two decades later, another key official fell ill, and Emperor Qianlong summoned Xu once more. Despite being 79 years old, Xu travelled to Beijing with his son, but passed away three days after arrival. See Yuan Mei 袁枚, "Xu Lingtai xiansheng zhuan 徐靈胎先生傳", in Xiaocang shanfang shiwenji 小倉山房詩文集, juan 34.
- 39 Xu Dachun 徐大椿, Yixue yuanliu lun 醫學源流論, 1.59a-b.
- 40 Chen Jie 陳杰, Hui sheng ji回生集, in Zhenben Yishu jicheng—Fangshu lei 珍本醫書集成-方書類, vol. 9.
- 41 See note 40.
- 42 Xu Zonggan 徐宗幹, Elu Zaji 惡盧雜記.
- Master Dongheng 東垣先生refers to Li Gao 李杲 (1180–1251), style name elder of Dongheng 東垣老人, famous physician known for his medical theory on spleen and stomach 脾胃說 during the Jin-Yuan period. For an introduction on history of medical theories in China, see Leung, *Miandui jibin*.
- 44 Xu Zonggan 徐宗幹, Elu Zaji 惡盧雜記, 20.
- 45 Xu Zonggan 徐宗幹, 31.
- His zi (literate name) includes Xinan 薪安 and Dingpu 定圃, as on the title of his Lenglu Yihua.
- 47 Lu Dingpu 陸定圃, Jingjiao Lenglu Yihua 精校冷盧醫話, 14.
- ⁴⁸ Zhuzi shanding yuquan zhenben taoyuan mingshengjing 朱子刪定玉泉真本桃園明聖經, Daozang jicheng diwuji Guandi juan, vol. 24, pp. 3–128.
- ⁴⁹ Li Guoping 李国平, "The Rise of Spirit-Writing Cults in Chaozhou: Reassessing the Role of Charitable Halls", 544.

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- ⁵⁰ See note 17.
- 51 Luo Dan 羅丹, "Spirit-Writing Altars in Contemporary Hong Kong: A Case Study of Fei Ngan Tung Buddhism and Daoism Society", 573.
- 52 Lai Wen 賴文 and Li Yongchen 李永宸, "Qingmo Guangdong Shantang de Yiliao Jiuji Huodong 清末廣東善堂的醫療救濟活動", 146.
- 53 Schumann and Valussi, 618.
- 54 Gaochun Pujitang zhi 高淳普濟堂志, Dai Fengjun 戴鳳筠 et al., comp., 1900, reprint in Jiangsu jinxiandai shehui jiuji yu cishan wenxian congkan 江蘇近現代社會救濟與慈善文獻叢刊, Fenghuang chubanshe, Nanjing, 2015.
- 55 See a study of the *Gaochun Pujitang zhi* 高淳普濟堂志 in (Goossaert 2019) which estimated that 70 percent of the almost 700 pages are devoted to revelations.
- Wen da tianjun shouwen jiangfu baochan 溫大天君收瘟降福寶懺, Sandong shiyi, Volume 11, pp. 458-83.
- 57 Katz, Demon Hordes and Burning Boats.
- Ganany, "Jigong"; Durand-Dastès, "Le Bonze Dément et l'abbé Clairvoyant, Ou Comment Jigong Fit l'apprentissage de La Folie".
- 59 Luo Dan 羅丹, "Spirit-Writing Altars in Contemporary Hong Kong: A Case Study of Fei Ngan Tung Buddhism and Daoism Society", 591–95.
- 60 Zhu Mingchuan 朱明川, "The Liu-Han Altar: Between a Literati Spirit-Writing Altar and Popular Religion", 329.
- 61 Shi Anren 釋安仁, Huyin chanyuan jishi 湖隱禪院記事 (1921), pp. 1–25. Cited in (Zhang 2014, p. 180).
- 62 Shanghai Zhongguo jishenghui zhanxing zhangcheng 上海中國濟生會暫行章程, 1918. See also Jishi tayuan zhi 濟師塔院志, 1928, pp. 45–47.
- 63 "Jishenghui zuokai gaizu dahui 濟生會昨開改組大會", Shenbao, March 4, 1929.
- 64 Chongjian Jinling Yuxu Guan jishi zhengxinlu 重建金陵玉虛觀紀事徵信錄, 1936.
- More on Wang Yiting, See (Katz and Goossaert 2021), Chapter 6.
- Wang, "Qingmo minchu".
- Wang.
- 68 (Billioud 2020). Chapter Three.
- 69 Luo Dan 羅丹, "Spirit-Writing Altars in Contemporary Hong Kong: A Case Study of Fei Ngan Tung Buddhism and Daoism Society", 564.
- ⁷⁰ See note 59.
- 71 Bao Tianxiao 包天笑, Chuanyinglou Huiyilu 釧影樓回憶錄. p. 71.
- 72 Zhu Mingchuan 朱明川, "The Liu-Han Altar: Between a Literati Spirit-Writing Altar and Popular Religion", 320.
- ⁷³ See note 17.
- ⁷⁴ See note 66.
- 75 Shanghai jiyunxuan cishan sheyou xingshi lu 上海集雲軒慈善社友姓氏錄, 1918.
- 76 "Jishenghui dangxuan zhiyuan mindan 濟生會當選職員名單", Shenbao, February 23, 1920.
- "Ji Yuan Hanyun xiansheng zhuidaohui 記袁寒雲先生追悼會", Shenbao, March 1, 1931.
- 78 "Jiyunxuan zashi 集雲軒雜詩", *Shenbao*, October 20, 1922. Published under Bu Zhangwu's pen-name Linwu shanren 林屋山人, Bu specifically emphasized that the poems were not his.
- One press article gives a detailed description of the activities of renji shantang, see: "Zuori juxing chengli dahui 昨日舉行成立大會", *Shenbao*, August 9, 1935.
- ⁸⁰ "Jishenghui erzhounian dahuiji 濟生會二週年大會紀", *Shenbao*, December 3, 1918. & "Jishenghui zhi geiyao mang 濟生會之給藥忙", *Shenbao*, July 14, 1919.
- 81 "Shanghai zhongguo jishenghui shiyaochu qishi 上海中國濟生會施藥處啟事", Shenbao, July 4, 1920.
- 82 "Cishan tuanti zhi jiuyi xiaoxi 慈善團體之救疫消息", Shenbao, August 21, 1919.
- ⁸³ "Shanghai zhongguo jishenghui shiyaochu qishi 上海中國濟生會施藥處啟事", *Shenbao*, Mar 22, 1923; May 24, 1923; May 28, 1923; May 30, 1923.
- 84 "Song shijun shiyao zhi ren 頌施君施藥之仁", Shenbao, May 31, 1924.
- 85 "Jishenghui luzhen xubao 濟生會魯賑續報", Shenbao, May 26, 1929 and "Jishenghui shizhen qufu zaiqu 濟生會施賑曲阜災區", Shenbao, August 31, 1930.
- 86 "Xu Shiying Wang Yiting fu lu fangzhen 許世英王一亭赴魯放振", Shenbao, May 30, 1928.
- 87 "Jiu xiaoer jijingfeng shenfang 救小兒急驚風神方", Shenbao, August 28, 1928.
- 88 "Jishenghui liangyao jishi 濟生會良藥濟世", Shenbao, June 29, 1931.
- 89 Qiu Wenqing, "Nanping pai yixue xinchuan shuhou 南屏派醫學薪傳書後", Jishi tayuan zhi 濟師塔院志, pp. 145–48. Zhongguo fosizhi congkan xubian 中國佛寺志叢刊續編, Jiangsu guji chubanshe. See also (Zhang 2014, p. 186).

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90 Wang Lianyou 王蓮友, ed., Chongjian Jinling Yuxu Guan jishi zhengxinlu 重建金陵玉虛觀紀事徵信錄 (1936), in *Zhongguo Daoguanzhi* congkan xubian 中國道觀志叢刊續編 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2004), vol. 15.

- 91 "Jishenghui zhi jishi desheng dan 濟生會之濟世得生丹", *Shenbao*, July 13, 1928 & "Jishenghui shisong fuke deshengdan 濟生會施送婦科得生丹", *Shenbao*, October 10, 1930.
- 92 "Jishenghui liangyao jishi 濟生會良藥濟世", Shenbao, November 9, 1936.
- 93 See note 92.
- ⁹⁴ "Jishenghui juansong yaopin jiu zaimin 濟生會捐送藥品救災民", Shenbao, July 26, 1933.
- 95 "Dapi yaomin shisong nanmin 大批藥品施送難民", Shenbao, December 18, 1933.
- "Jishenghui zhenyao jiuzai 濟生會振藥救災", Shenbao, August 9, 1935.

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