

Authority, Practice and History: Adoption and Re-creation of *Yaoqian* in Taiwan*

Jin-shiu Jessie Sung**

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I aim to discuss the production of medical knowledge in rural Taiwan in light of the adoption and re-creation of prescription divinations (*yaoqian*), which entails an interrogation of the relation between authority, practice and history. My data are derived from ethnographic fieldwork and the laboriously collected materials of *yaoqian* from temples. Involved in this production of medical knowledge are local authorities, individual specialists, and the supplicants soliciting *yaoqian*. The key issues I raise include the following. How has such medical knowledge been historically established as a local practice? How has its healing efficacy been perceived by the faithful? What is thought to endow *yaoqian* with the power to heal in general? And further, what is the difference in essence between the diverse collections of *yaoqian*?

First of all, I suggested that the healing efficacy in soliciting *yaoqian* was perceived through a series of standard procedures with self-examination and easy access. Moreover, the solicitation of *yaoqian* is an act of divination established on the basis of morality and godliness of the worshippers. Among the procedures, the casting of wooden blocks (*buabuei* in South Fukien) serves as a cultural mechanism crucial for knowing what is unknown and obtaining multiple divine confirmations, which reflects the major logic of the practice.

Secondly, by using the ‘lineage’ approach instead of the divine origin ‘system’, I suggested that there exists ‘alienation’ between divine origins and healing power of *yaoqian*. There is no *Dadagong qian*, *Wuguwang qian*, *Lüzu*

* This work was supported by Academia Sinica funded project-program Religion and Medicine (2002-2004), Taipei. Paper draft has been presented at the 17th New Zealand Asian Studies Society International Conference co-organized by NZASIA and the University of Otago, Dunedin, 22nd–25th November, 2007. I would like to express gratitude to Prof. Margaret Jolly, Dr. Tamara Jacka, Dr. Jin-bao Nie, as well as Dr. An-bang Yu, Dr. Hsun Chang and Dr. Fu-shi Lin for their kindly sharing and understanding. My special thanks go to two anonymous reviewers for the journal for their great comments and their patience with my belated responses due to personal condition. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Prof. Ts'ui-jung Liu and Dr. Paul Katz who read the first revision of this paper and offered me very inspiring suggestions.

** Research Assistant, Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
來稿日期：2011年10月31日；通過刊登：2012年6月27日。

qian or *Mazu qian* in essence, since most *Mazu qian*, *Dadaogong qian* and *Lüzü qian* were used interchangeably by those temples dedicated to the three Gods of Medicine (*yi yao shen*) and the Goddess of Heaven (Mazu).

Finally, with my lineage analysis I noted that the decision on which collection of *yaoqian* was to be adopted by an individual temple was influenced by historical ties with its premier temple, as well as the changes in timeline. Moreover, the impact of social factors on the adoption and re-creation of *yaoqian* collections is of great importance. By tracing the circulation of *Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi* (*Lüdi xianfang*) with many editions published, I highlighted that the influence of printing and the performative mediator of phoenix halls (*luantang*) have contributed to the production of *yaoqian*. In particular, the initiated members of phoenix halls and local gentry with textual knowledge administrating *luantang* are crucial to the transmission and local adaptation of *yaoqian* knowledge.

Keywords: Soliciting Divination for Health Problems (*zhanbu wenji*), Prescription Divination (*yaoqian*), Local Practice, Phoenix Halls (*luantang*), Production of Medical Knowledge

1. Introduction: Research Concerns, Literature and Fieldwork
 2. Healing Power and Mechanisms for Knowing
 3. Alienation between Divine Origins and Healing Power
 4. Authority and Practice: *Yaoqian* in History
 5. Conclusion
-

1. Introduction: Research Concerns, Literature and Fieldwork

Yaoqian (藥籤) refer to those popular prescription divinations on bamboo slips, especially for illnesses, disorders and health problems, thus making soliciting *yaoqian* an important local practice in rural Taiwan. Written clearly on *yaoqian* are details of the prescription including herbs used, dosage, and symptoms of the illness it is appropriate for. Specified by temples, these prescription divinations are related to different deities of temples under Han Taiwanese popular religion. Hence, there exists among the faithful many oracle verses (*qian* 籤) named after the key deity venerated, such as *Dadaogong qian* (大道公籤), *Wuguwang qian* (五穀王籤), *Lüzü qian* (呂祖籤) and *Mazu qian* (媽祖籤) (See Section 3-1).

As an emerging topic in the field of medical anthropology, results of research on prescription divinations in Taiwan have become plentiful. It is Shi Zhen-min (施振民)¹ who launched the research and data collecting of *yaoqian* in Taiwan, and he was deemed a pioneer from my point of view. It is until the late 2000s that Chang Yong-xun (張永勳)² et al. and Sung Jin-shiu (宋錦秀)³

¹ Zhen-min Shi, coll., *Beigang Chaotiangong shengqian fu shengqianjie yaoqian sanzong* [Sacred Divinations from Chaotian Gong, Beigang: With Interpretations and Other Prescription Divinations Attached] (Beigang, Yunlin County: Beigang Chaotiangong, 1977).

² Yong-xun Chang, et al., *Taiwan diqu shimiao yaoqian xiankuang zhi diaocha yanjiu* [Investigation of Medical Divinatory Lots Currently Used by Temples in Taiwan Area]. Research reported by Institute of Chinese Pharmaceutical Sciences, Chinese Medical College (Taipei: Committee on Chinese Medicine and Pharmacy, Department of Health, Executive Yuan, 1999).

conducted research surveys nationwide, which served as the reference framework for understanding Taiwanese culture of soliciting *yaoqian*, both contemporary and historically. Meanwhile, experts in Chinese pharmaceuticals, such as Qiu Nian-yong (邱年永)⁴ and Lu Zhao-lin (魯兆麟),⁵ offered professional textual annotations on some sample collections. Some multidisciplinary Master theses also made research on *yaoqian* fruitful; Chen Tai-sheng (陳泰昇),⁶ as well as Chen Tai-sheng and Chen Zheng-heng (陳政恆)⁷ et al., provided pharmaceutical perspectives which help shed light on the establishment, and the localization, of *yaoqian* in the course of Taiwanese history.

In addition, Cai Ming-xiong (蔡銘雄)⁸ proposed an assumption about the ‘impending fate’ of *yaoqian* in contemporary Taiwan while Chen Wen-ning (陳文寧)⁹ had a more comprehensive discussion about the factors crucial for the development. Lai Zi-yi (賴子儀)¹⁰ highlighted his research focus on the politics of knowledge in particular. Using the notion of safety vs. risk, Lai explored the nature of *yaoqian* as local knowledge in substitution for Western biomedicine as universal knowledge.

³ Jin-shiu Sung, “Taiwan de ‘yiyaoshen’ xinyang [Belief in Medical Gods in Rural Taiwanese Society],” *Wenhua shichuang* 5 (November 1998), pp. 44-52; Jin-shiu Sung, “Taiwan simiao yaoqian huibian: Yilan ‘yiyaoshen’ de xitong [Collections of Prescription Divinations from Temples: The System of Medical Gods in Yilan County],” *Yilan wenxian* 37 (January 1999), pp. 3-46.

⁴ Nian-yong Qiu, *Taiwan simiao yaoqian kaoshi* [The Exegesis of Yaoqian from Taiwanese Temples] (Tainan: Quanguo Baosheng Dadi miaoyu lianyihui, 1993).

⁵ Zhao-lin Lu, *Dalongdong Baoangong Baosheng Dadi yaoqian jei* [Interpretations of the Prescription Divinations from Baosheng Dadi in Dalongdong Area] (Taipei: Caituanfaren Taipei Baoangong, 1998).

⁶ Tai-sheng Chen, “Taiwan yaoqian diaocha yu yanjiu [Field Survey and Studies on the Temple Pharmaceutical Lots in Taiwan]” (Master thesis. Taichung: China Medical College, 2003).

⁷ Tai-sheng Chen and Zheng-heng Chen, et al., “Taiwan yaoqian de chengqian shijian ji qi yingxiang yinsu [Factors Influencing the Creation of Prescription Divination in Taiwan],” paper presented at the Conference “*Medicine and Culture*.” (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology and Preparatory Office, Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, October 24-25, 2001).

⁸ Ming-xiong Cai, “Xiaoshizhong de minsu yiliao: Yaoqian zai Taiwan minjian shehui fazhan chutan [The Impending Fate of Divinatory Prescription: A Preliminary Report of a Healing Ritual in Taiwan Folk Beliefs]” (Master thesis. Taichung: Tunghai University, 2009).

⁹ Wen-ning Chen, “Shimiao minsu liaofa zhi tanjiu: Yi qiuyaoqian de zuguan jingyan weili [A Study of the Temple’s Folk Medicine: The Subjective Experience of Wishing for Pharmaceutical Lots]” (Master thesis. Taipei: Taipei Medical College, 2000).

¹⁰ Zi-yi Lai, “Cong zaidi zhishi chufa: Yiliao anquan yu fengxian de linglei shijiao - Yi yaoqian weili [The Alternative Perspective of Medical Security and Risk in Terms of Local Knowledge: A Study on Pharmaceutical Lots],” paper presented at the TNUA 2007 Symposium “*Culture Resources: Visions of Local Culture*.” (Taipei: Taipei National University of the Arts, December 6-8, 2007).

It is worthy to note that Yoshimoto Shōji (吉元昭治)¹¹ thought that Taiwanese *yaoqian* were grounded in ancient Chinese tradition of divination; Yoshimoto's work has been so far one of the endeavours in exploring this subject with historical depth. Lin Guo-ping (林國平),¹² Xie Cong-hui (謝聰輝)¹³ et al., and Yau Chi-on (游子安)¹⁴ also examined this topic from historical perspectives. Lin Guo-ping's work is of great significance in linking Taiwanese *yaoqian* to those of Qing China, in particular, in Fukien Province. Xie et al. outlined the transmission of a Taiwanese sample collection of *yaoqian*, which could be traced back to the spirit-writing tradition of Guangdong Province. Yau also contributed his viewpoint on historical relations as the above-mentioned but further affiliated the tradition of Guangdong to that of Southeast Asia.

Moreover, Lin Mei-rong (林美容) and Li Jun-xiong (李俊雄)¹⁵ and Chang Yu-chun (張育銓)¹⁶ provided detailed ethnography in local contexts, and further dealt with the issue of efficacy. Lin and Li observed the healing efficacy of *yaoqian* in light of some practices of preparing the medication. Chang viewed formation of the efficacy of folk medicine as a social, psychological and pharmacological process, by examining 'the god's prescriptions made from spirit mediums' divinatory process' (*shemindan* 神明單). It shows the dialectic between biology and culture since the efficacy of *shemindan* is quite beyond the

¹¹ Shōji Yoshimoto, *Taiwan simiao yaoqian yanjiu* [Research on Prescription Divinations from Taiwanese Temples] (Taipei: Wuling Chubanshe, 1990).

¹² Guo-ping Lin, "Fujian chuantong shehui de minsu liaofa yu simiao yaoqian," *Yilan wenxian* [The Yilan Journal of History] 37 (January 1999), pp. 47-89.

¹³ Cong-hui Xie, et al., "Taiwan yaoqian Lüdi xianfang de yuanyuan yu chuancheng chutan [Preliminary Research on Origin and Transmission of Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi]," in San-leng Su, et al. eds., *Taiwan zhongyi koushu lishi zhuanji* [Special Edition on Oral History of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Taiwan] (Taipei: Traditional Chinese Medicine Association, 2003), pp. 209-221.

¹⁴ Chi-on Yau, "Boji xianfang: Qingmo yilai Lingnan diqu xianfang, shanshu yu Lüzü xinyang [Divine Medical Prescriptions, Morality Books and the Master Lü Cult in South China since the Late Qing]," *Zhongguo keji shi zazhi* [The Chinese Journal for the History of Science and Technology] 32(A1) (2011), pp. 47-63.

¹⁵ Mei-rong Lin and Jun-xiong Li, "Zhanghua Nanyaogong de yaoqian [Prescription Divinations from Nanyao Gong, Zhanghua City]," *Minzuxue yanjiusuo ziliao huibian* [Field Materials, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica] 5 (June 1991), pp. 39-65.

¹⁶ Yu-chun Chang, "Shenmingdan de yiyao renleixue fenxi: Yi Hsinchu shi weili [A Perspective of Medical Anthropology on Shenmingdan: A Case Study of Hsinchu]" (Master thesis. Hsinchu: National Tsing Hua University, 1996).

binaries of biomedicine and folk medicine, disease and illness. These studies all contributed to this field of scholarship.

My previous works of 2007 (conference paper)¹⁷ and 2011¹⁸ situated my theoretical concerns in a framework of Divination and Healing in line with the researches of Yoshimoto Shōji, Lin Mei-rong et al. and Chang Yu-chun. On the one hand, I explored the cultural mechanisms of soliciting *yaoqian*. The major underlying theme is that the healing power/efficacy in the solicitation comes from an array of mechanisms of divination, in which Taiwanese moral-cultural values were imbedded. On the other hand, I probed into the categorization of the illnesses shown in *yaoqian*, so as to find the fundamentals of ‘the philosophy of healing’.¹⁹ Various types of illnesses found in *yaoqian* help shed light on the perception of illness in the rural society of Taiwan,²⁰ revealing that *yaoqian* can have demonstrable effects on curing. Such finding renders further support to the discourse of cultural constructionism. It also shows that illness is the local manifestation of cultural logic between and beyond gender.

For analysing the plethora of *yaoqian* offered by temples, my conference paper²¹ suggested a preliminary ‘lineage’ approach (see Section 3-2). What I observed is that the versions of *yaoqian* given by a temple and the key deity venerated in that temple may be different. This indicates that *yaoqian* — as a local practice performed to date — can be seen as an ‘alternative mode of knowing’²² in terms of epistemology and therapeutic functions. That is,

¹⁷ Jin-shiu Sung, “Temperament, Morality, and Disorders: Illnesses in Han Taiwanese Practice of *Yaoqian*,” paper presented at “*The 17th New Zealand Asian Studies Society International Conference*” (New Zealand, Dunedin: NZASIA and The University of Otago, November 22-25, 2007).

¹⁸ Jin-shiu Sung, “Simiao yaoqian liaoyu wenhua yu jibing de jiangou [The Construction of Healing Power and Illness: A Study of Prescription Divination ‘*Yaoqian*’],” *Taiwan wenxian* [Taiwan Report of Historico-Geographical Studies of Taiwan] 62(1) (March 2011), pp. 55-96.

¹⁹ See Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart, *Curing and Healing: Medical Anthropology in Global Perspective* (Durham, N. C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1999).

²⁰ Apart from the conventional physical perspective, I specified other viewpoints regarding aetiology and concluded that human temperament, morality and supernatural forces endowed with *yaoqian* may act on Taiwanese illnesses.

²¹ Jin-shiu Sung, “Taiwan simiao yaoqian zhi xitong leixing yu jibing wenhua: Yi Lüdi xianfang wenben wei zhongxin [Lineages of Taiwanese Prescription Divinations and the Culture of Illness: With a Focus on Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi],” paper presented at the Conference “*Divination and Healing*” (Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, August 29, 2003).

²² See Michael Winkelman and Philip M. Peek, eds., *Divination and Healing: Potent Vision* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004).

soliciting *yaoqian* “always implies a cognitive operation, a practical operation of construction which sets to work, by reference to practical functions, systems of classification [in a given culture] which organize perception and structure practice”, as in Bourdieu’s sense of ‘practice’.²³

In conversation with previous studies mentioned above, this paper deals with Han Taiwanese adoption and re-creation of *yaoqian* in history. My aim is to answer questions including what ‘*Dadaogong qian*’ or ‘*Lüzü qian*’ means in essence and how *yaoqian* emerged and functioned in particular in rural Taiwan. In other words, my major concern is to discuss the production of medical knowledge (*yaoqian* and the like) as in Foucauldians’ model, which sees medicine as one of the disciplines that has imaged the human body as a crucial site for the articulation of social relationships and power. And thus, the act of ‘demystifying’ knowledge becomes a major proposition of the Foucauldians, apparent in Emily Martin,²⁴ Margaret Lock,²⁵ and Allan Young’s works,²⁶ for example.

On the whole, there has been general agreement among the Foucauldians that medicine is no unitary thing: different practices produce different kinds of knowledge; medical knowledge of all kinds is created in particular contexts and in changing arrangements of power.²⁷ That is, medical ‘facts’ are constructed by the historical-social processes that shape the changing medical knowledge, practice and illness experience in any society.²⁸ This is also the key point that

²³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans., Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 97.

²⁴ Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-female Roles,” *Signs* 16(3) (Spring 1991), pp. 485-501.

²⁵ Margaret Lock, “The Politics of Mid-Life and Menopause: Ideologies for the Second Sex in North America and Japan,” in Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds., *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993a), pp. 330-363; Margaret Lock, *Encounters with Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993b).

²⁶ Allan Young, “The Anthropologies of Illness and Sickness,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11 (October 1982), pp. 257-285; Allan Young, “A Description of How Ideology Shapes Knowledge of a Mental Disorder (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder),” in Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds., *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*, pp. 108-128.

²⁷ See Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds., *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*.

²⁸ See Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-female Roles,” pp. 485-501; Margaret Lock, “The Politics of Mid-Life and Menopause: Ideologies for the Second Sex in North America and Japan,” pp. 330-363; Margaret Lock, *Encounters with Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America*.

Allan Young asserts: all knowledge of society and illness is socially determined and what we need is a critical understanding of how medical ‘facts’ are predetermined by the process through which they are conventionally produced in different settings. Thus, the task at hand is not simply to demystify knowledge, but to critically examine the social conditions of knowledge production.²⁹

This process is also very clear in the seeming ‘facts’ of soliciting *yaoqian*, which was used as a strong alternative given the very existence of medical pluralism in rural Taiwan. Indeed, the solicitation of *yaoqian* offers an example of the production of medical knowledge, and thus entails an interrogation of the relation between authority, practice and history. Involved in this production are local authorities, individual specialists, and the supplicants soliciting *yaoqian*. One of the important objectives of this research is to disclose the cultural contexts and social settings in which Taiwanese *yaoqian* was produced and transmitted. Such disclosure also sheds light on the process whereby the authority of certain *yaoqian* had been established in the course of social history. The key issues I raise include the following. How has such medical knowledge been historically established as a local practice? How has its healing efficacy been perceived by the faithful? What is thought to endow *yaoqian* with the power to heal in general? And further, what is the difference in essence between the diverse collections of *yaoqian*?

My data here are derived from the laboriously collected materials of *yaoqian* from temples and my ethnographic fieldwork conducted mostly in 1996-1997, 2002-2003 and 2011. In this research, I took the rural Dajia community, Taichung County and rural Sanxing Community, Yilan County as my fieldwork sites. My sample survey in Yilan and Taichung County focused mainly on the prescription divinations of the three Gods of Medicine (*yiyao shen* 醫藥神): Baosheng Dadi (保生大帝), the Great Sovereign Who Protects Life; Shennong Dadi (神農大帝), the God of Agriculture and Medicine; and Fuyou Dijin (孚佑帝君; also known as Lü Dong-bin 呂洞賓), the Reliable Sovereign Who Protects the People. There were a total of 38 temples in Yilan and Taichung County, both officially registered and non-registered, with the Gods of Medicine as the key deity worshipped. Among them, 10 were dedicated to Baosheng Dadi, 15 to Shennong Dadi, and 13 to Fuyou Dijin. My sample

²⁹ Allan Young, “The Anthropologies of Illness and Sickness,” p. 277; Allan Young, “A Description of How Ideology Shapes Knowledge of a Mental Disorder (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder),” pp. 108-128.

survey also included the prescription divinations of the Goddess of Heaven (Tianshang Shengmu 天上聖母, also known as Mazu 媽祖) prevalent in Taiwan.

In particular, my intensive fieldwork focused on Zhenlan Gong (鎮瀾宮) of Dajia Town, Taichung County and dedicated to Mazu; Fuxing Gong (福興宮) at Sankang Village of Waipu Rural Area, Taichung County and dedicated to Shennong Dadi, as well as Baoan Gong (保安宮) at Weiqian Village of Sanxing Rural Area, Yilan County and dedicated to Baosheng Dadi. Qualitative study was also made on four most representative temples of the Gods of Medicine in Taiwan. They are (1) Xingji Gong (興濟宮) located in Tainan City (Baosheng Dadi); built around 1647-1683, the Southern Ming Dynasty, (2) Ciji Gong (慈濟宮) located in Xuejia Town, Tainan County (Baosheng Dadi); built in 1661, the Southern Ming Dynasty, (3) Baoan Gong (保安宮) located in Dalongdong, Taipei City (Baosheng Dadi); built in 1742, mid Qing Dynasty, and (4) Zhinan Gong (指南宮) located in Muzha, Taipei City (Fuyou Dijin); built in 1882, late Qing Dynasty (see Table 2 - List of Temples' Appendices).

To begin with, Section 2 generalises the cultural mechanism for 'soliciting divination for health problems' (*zhanbu wenji* 占卜問疾) in the series of procedures of soliciting *yaoqian*. This is done to illuminate the healing power and cultural metaphors deployed underlying the logic of the practice. Special emphasis is on the casting of wooden blocks (*buabuei* 博杯/擲筊 in South Fukien dialect) as the mechanism for knowing what is unknown and obtaining multiple confirmations such that the healing power was authorised.

In Section 3, the prescription divinations collected through my survey in Taichung and Yilan County are categorized using a more comprehensive framework of 'lineages' instead of (deity) 'system'. This helps shed light on the origin and development of *yaoqian* as well as their kinship relations. In light of such lineages, I probe further into the relation between the key deity venerated and the entity of *yaoqian* identified with. By using the lineage approach, I suggest that there exists 'alienation' between divine origins and healing power. This also shows, to a certain extent, that the adoption of *yaoqian* for some temples is 'productive' and accommodates their individual conditions beyond divine origins.

In Section 4, *Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi* (*Lüdi xianfang* 呂帝仙方) is taken as an example to explore further the issue of the adoption and re-creation of *yaoqian* in Taiwan. *Lüdi xianfang* refers not only to the early collection of *yaoqian* which Fuxing Gong of Sankang, Taichung County

adopted, but also to the current one which Baoan Gong of Sanxing, Yilan County introduced. It is one of the most representative collections among the different lineages across Taiwan. Examining the adoption of *Lüdi xianfang* would lead us to explore the micro-history of Fuxing Gong and Baoan Gong in their collections of *yaoqian*. And further, the socio-historical process whereby *Lüdi xianfang* was established as the sample collection of authority is elaborated. Altogether in this paper, the ‘authenticity’ of the divine power of *yaoqian* perceived by the faithful is explored, showing the individual policy of temples between authority and practice.

2. Healing Power and Mechanisms for Knowing

The origin of *yaoqian* is hard to verify but it is known to be related to the tradition of Taoist charms (*fulu* 符籙) or a religious Taoist campaign ‘The Way of Five Pecks of Grain’ (*Wudoumi jiao* 五斗米教) found by Zhang Ling (張陵; 34-156 A.D.).³⁰ According to the *Principles of Composition, Exegesis, and Phonetics of Chinese Characters* (*Shuowen tongxun dingsheng* 說文通訓定聲) and *The Great Dictionary* (*Cihai* 辭海), *qian* is a bamboo slip engraved with signs or an oracle verse. To solicit *qian* involves drawing such a bamboo slip in front of gods who will foretell the good or bad luck for the faithful.³¹ Those bamboo slips with general divinations on fate and fortune are called *yunqian* (運籤), whereas those with prescription divinations on illness and health are called *yaoqian*. Regarded as having spiritual power by means of divination (see below), both *yunqian* and *yaoqian* also function like charms.

As a cultural vehicle in the communication between the world of mortals and the supernatural, soliciting *yaoqian* is in essence a practice of ‘soliciting divination for health problems’; it presents the essentials of ‘practicing

³⁰ See “Wudaomi Dao” (五斗米道) in CHINAKNOWLEDGE: A Universal Guide for China Studies, Online: <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Religion/schoolswudoumidao.html>; see also “Tianshi Dao” (天師道) in The Encyclopedia of Taoism, Online: http://www.goldenelixir.com/publications/eot_tianshi_dao.html. (Accessed April 17, 2012).

³¹ Hanyu dazidian bianji weiyuanhui, eds., Hanyu dazidian [Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Chinese Language.] (Wuhan City: Hubei cishu chubanshe and Sichuan cishu chubanshe, 1988), pp. 3032-3033; Yong-xun Chang, et al., Taiwan diqu shimiao yaoqian xiankuang zhi diaocha yanjiu [Investigation of Medical Divinatory Lots Currently Used by Temples in Taiwan Area], p. 12.

divination or asking the gods for an oracle' (*qiuqian wenbu* 求籤問卜) under Han Taiwanese popular religion.³² Soliciting *yaoqian* involves a series of procedures to empower its efficacy. The current practice includes shaking a bamboo container, which holds bamboo slips each marked with a different number. The bamboo slip that falls from the container is taken in exchange for a verse marked with the same number. Interpretations of the verse serve as the oracle from the god concerning the petition of the supplicant.

Moreover, the supplicant has to cast two wooden blocks three times to get divination from the deity. These two wooden blocks (*buei* 杯/筊 in South Fukien dialect) have *Yin* (陰) on one surface and *Yang* (陽) on the other. The pair of blocks showing one *Yin* and one *Yang* consecutively three times indicates the deity's approval, and the prescription divination can be taken as truly the divine will for the prayer intentions. Otherwise, another bamboo slip has to be drawn with the wooden blocks cast again until final affirmation is obtained. The supplicant can then proceed to fill the prescriptions at the Chinese herbal shop specified by the god or the temple. In this case, the *yaoqian* solicited contains all the information concerning medication, dosage, treatment, and divination.³³

However, in some temples, the practice may be slightly different.³⁴ What I learnt from the fieldwork is that these variations did not have a great impact on

³² Generally speaking, the ill person seeking *yaoqian* can come in person or send a representative who states clearly in front of god the name of the sick or details of the request. After paying respects and expressing his/her intentions in a prayer, he or she can then draw out randomly a bamboo slip to procure a prescription divination from the god apropos the illness concerned.

³³ Jin-shiu Sung, "Taiwan simiao yaoqian huibian: Yilan 'yiyashen' de xitong [Collections of Prescription Divinations from Temples: The System of Medical Gods in Yilan County]," p. 6; Jin-shiu Sung, "Simiao yaoqian liaoyu wenhua yu jibing de jiangou [The Construction of Healing Power and Illness: A Study of Prescription Divination 'Yaoqian']," p. 70.

³⁴ For example, instead of being written on the *yaoqian*, details of the prescription are listed in a prescription divination book (*yaobu* 藥簿). The temple may or may not have the full prescription divination book but the details of the *yaoqian* or particulars of the medication and treatment will not be disclosed to the worshippers. Baoan Gong of Dalongdong, Taipei City and Zhenlan Gong of Dajia, Taichung County are currently using this practice. See Jin-shiu Sung, "Taiwan simiao yaoqian huibian: Yilan 'yiyashen' de xitong [Collections of Prescription Divinations from Temples: The System of Medical Gods in Yilan County]," pp. 6-7; Jin-shiu Sung, "Simiao yaoqian liaoyu wenhua yu jibing de jiangou [The Construction of Healing Power and Illness: A Study of Prescription Divination 'Yaoqian']," pp. 70-71. There are also some temples that provide copies of the series of prescriptions only, with neither bamboo slips nor their container available. See Mei-rong Lin and Jun-xiong Li, "Zhanghua Nanyao Gong de yaoqian [Prescription Divinations from Nanyao Gong, Zhanghua City]," pp. 39-40.

the authority of *yaoqian*. For the supplicants, the approval and final affirmation from the deity obtained by casting the wooden blocks on the desired prescriptions one by one is crucial to the efficacy of the *yaoqian* procured, beyond the partial difference in the solicitation ritual.

Xingji Gong of Tainan has a special practice which highlights the authority associated with divine sanction of *yaoqian* for the worshippers. Examination by the deity is required and a diagnosis has to be obtained before the solicitation of *yaoqian*. The supplicants have to worship the temple god holding three joss sticks in both hands and describe the symptoms of their health problems. Then the three joss sticks will be put on the wrist to present to god who is asked to perform the body check. After the ashes from each of the joss sticks have dropped once on the altar, the diagnosis is considered made. The same procedures of drawing a bamboo slip and casting two wooden blocks then follow, similar to the procedures of other temples given above.³⁵

The casting of wooden blocks plays a significant role in soliciting *yaoqian*. One casting is for one question only and before each casting, personal particulars including the name, age and address of the worshipper have to be stated clearly followed by the question asked or the petition. The presentation of one *Yin* and one *Yang* (*hsinbuei* 聖筊 in South Fukien dialect) indicates the deity's approval while two *Yins* (*yinbuei* 陰筊 in South Fukien dialect) denote disapproval, and two *Yangs* (*chuobuei* 笑筊 in South Fukien dialect) imply pending approval.³⁶ Bamboo slips drawn with *yinbuei* or *chuobuei* cast have to be discarded and re-drawn until *hsinbuei* is obtained. As seen, *buabuei* is a means to obtain multiple confirmations of the god's will, which in turn share out the risks invoked from the solicitation.

In essence, *buabuei* is a basic divination method for divine confirmations, a ritual practice for knowing what is unknown by means of oracles, as in Evans-Prichard's model.³⁷ *Buabuei* involves simple presentation and clear

³⁵ Source: Fieldwork survey in Xingji Gong of Tainan City conducted in September 2010. See also Yong-xun Chang, et al., *Taiwan diqu shimiao yaoqian xiankuang zhi diaocha yanjiu* [Investigation of Medical Divinatory Lots Currently Used by Temples in Taiwan Area], pp. 23-24.

³⁶ *Chuobue* can mean that the deity cannot decide on the basis of the worshipper's vague description, or the deity is laughing at the outrageous request that can never be fulfilled.

³⁷ 'Divination' is a method of discovering what is unknown, and often cannot be known, by experiment and logic, and 'oracles' are those techniques which are supposed to reveal what cannot be discovered at all, or cannot be discovered for certain. See E. E. Evans-Prichard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), especially Appendix I on p. 228.

interpretations of the signs given, such as *hsinbuei*, *yinbuei* and *chuobuei*. Each casting of the wooden blocks with obvious visible results given confirms the religious zeal and moral attitude of the faithful. The functional purpose of *buabuei* can be assessed instantaneously and its efficacy is enhanced each time it is performed. The experience of Mr Xie Rong-jin (謝榮金) (1931-), a master of religious ceremonies of Fuxing Gong in Sankang Village of Waipu, can vividly depict the moral-psychological condition of the faithful when seeking divine confirmation through *buabuei*.³⁸ Needless to say, *buabuei* is certainly not a ritual practice unique to the solicitation of *yaoqian*. Nevertheless, *buabuei* forms a critical part in soliciting *yaoqian*, which presents fast working verification once and again, and thus the convictions of the worshippers accrues with every single casting.

Preparation for the medication of *yaoqian* also involves some rituals.³⁹ The concoction should be made in the main hall of the residence facing outside. Incense should be offered to pray for the coming of the deity. Then the burning incense should be placed either in the incense burner or the stove for brewing the herbal formula, a practice recommended in *Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi* (*Lüdi xianfang*) as ‘*fenxiang zai lu*’ (焚香在爐). Hence, taking the medication prescribed in *yaoqian* is also known literally as ‘eating the burning incense’ (*chia huiyen* 吃香煙 in South Fukien dialect).⁴⁰ “When preparing the medication, people of the older generation will pray first, asking the deity to make up for any deficiency in the formula so that it can become more effective. Nowadays, people just simplify the practice but still burn three joss sticks on the side of the stove to show their sincerity”, the Chinese medicine practitioners in Dajia said.⁴¹ After the treatment begins, divine will

³⁸ Source: Fieldwork conducted in Sankang, Waipu, in April and May 2003. See also Jin-shiu Sung, “Simiao yaoqian liaoyu wenhua yu jibing de jiangou [The Construction of Healing Power and Illness: A Study of Prescription Divination ‘Yaoqian’],” p. 76.

³⁹ Source: Fieldwork in Wugu Miao of Yilan and Fuxing Gong of Waipu conducted in 1996 and 2003.

⁴⁰ Mei-rong Lin and Jun-xiong Li, “Zhanghua Nanyaogong de yaoqian [Prescription Divinations from Nanyao Gong, Zhanghua City],” p. 39.

⁴¹ Source: Fieldwork conducted in April 2003 at Yufang Tang, a renowned Chinese herbal shop in Dajia specified by Zhenlan Gong; see Jin-shiu Sung, “Simiao yaoqian liaoyu wenhua yu jibing de jiangou [The Construction of Healing Power and Illness: A Study of Prescription Divination ‘Yaoqian’],” p. 72. Similar arrangement of the medication can be found in Tiannong Miao in Jiaoxi, Yilan County. See also Jin-shiu Sung, “Taiwan simiao yaoqian huibian: Yilan ‘yiyao shen’ de xitong [Collections of Prescription Divinations from Temples: The System of Medical Gods in Yilan County],” pp. 15, 19.

concerning how much medication should be taken and whether the medication needs to be changed has also to be solicited and confirmed through *buabuei*. In addition to following the instruction of the deity to fill the prescription at the herbal shop specified, the above procedures can be seen as mechanisms for obtaining multiple confirmations from the deity.

Besides the above-mentioned, it is interesting to note that temple keepers, members of executive committees, oracles interpreters, and Chinese medicine practitioners may play a leading role as the medical medium for soliciting *yaoqian*. However, all these local authorities, individual specialists as well as worshippers in general, put great emphasis on the divine power of the prescription divinations as a guarantee for its efficacy. At the same time, worshippers seem to be very vague in describing the symptoms of their illnesses. Very general descriptions are given, showing that they do not have a clear idea of their conditions.⁴² The report from Mr. Xie Bing-lang (謝炳朗) (1914-), the most senior member of Fuxing Gong Committee, Sankang, can shed light on the conditions under which people seek to solicit *yaoqian*.⁴³

[Narrative 1] Only when the faithful solicit *yaoqian* [following the procedures] with sincerity will the prescription divinations that Fuxing Gong offered become effective. My mother, Ms. Feng Zhang Mian (1897-?), always went to Fuxing Gong to solicit *yaoqian* on the first and fifteenth day of every lunar month in her entire life. While soliciting *yaoqian*, everyone needs to state to deities whatever the symptoms he or she suffered, with a very sincere and respectful heart. I followed the ways of taking the prescription divinations from Wugu Wang of Fuxing Gong and got absolute proof of its efficacy. For example, I had a bad cough some twenty years ago. The Western physician suggested that I had to have my sputum tested. However, I sought for *yaoqian* instead and had the prescription filled at the specified Chinese herbal shop. I just took it once and did not have sputum anymore. There were still many village fellows soliciting *yaoqian* some twenty years ago. Nowadays, we cannot even find those herbs listed in *yaoqian*. Needless to say, modern medical practitioners are more easily

⁴² In other words, the sick seeking medication consultation and treatment through *yaoqian* make no distinction in the types of illnesses they suffer. For those soliciting *yaoqian* for relief of health problems, probing the causality of their illnesses does not seem to be their major concern.

⁴³ Source: Fieldwork conducted in Sankang Village and Fuxing Gong of Sankang, Waipu. Interview data were mainly recorded on 30th November 2003 and 28th February 2004. Born in 1914, Mr. Xie Bing-lang is one of the most senior members of both Fuxing Temple Committee and Sankang Village. He graduated from Colonial Waipu Primary School around 1928, and once pursued further education in North Taiwan. Xie is very knowledgeable about folk religion and local history among his contemporaries.

available than before and the government has also implemented labour insurance and health insurance.

In the old days, whatever symptoms suffered can be frankly stated to our deities, such as the common cold and flu, stomach ache, and even surgical injuries. We just experienced a few types of illnesses in everyday lives. Moreover, the herbs the deities prescribed in *yaoqian* are not very expensive. It just cost us a few dollars, equivalent to ten dollars or so today.

As revealed, popular conventions and local influences are more dominating than traditional Chinese medicine in *yaoqian*, and thus there are many variations and combinations of the herbs that can be used in the prescriptions.⁴⁴ According to Chinese medicine practitioners, some of the *yaoqian* are all-purpose ones, meaning that they are suitable for treating headache, stomach ache, diarrhoea and many kinds of illnesses. What is significant is that the worshippers attribute the cure to psychological reassurance offered by the protection and blessing of a certain deity through the *yaoqian*.⁴⁵ This echoes another observation that for those supplicants soliciting *yaoqian*, their judgment in decision-making is not affected much by the type or severity of the illnesses; there are not many incurable or terminal cases opting for prescription divination as the last-resort treatment.

Moreover, in the era when ‘modern’ medical resources are not easily available and choices of medical treatment are relatively limited, solicitation of *yaoqian* is a widely recognised practice for seeking treatment of health problems. Soliciting *yaoqian* can even be practised under the condition of the family-based popular health care managed by female elders who had the latent medical power in practice. Before the 1970s or early 1980s, at least, *Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi* served as a handbook for general medicine

⁴⁴ My careful review of prescriptions for pregnancy and prenatal care listed in *The Prescription Divination Book from Baoan Temple (Baoan Gong yaobu 保安宮藥簿)*, Tainan, shows the following with respect to the sources of *yaoqian*. Among the prescribed medications, 28.3% of them have their roots in standard prescriptions in traditional Chinese medicine, which clearly specify their desired medical effects. Around 39.1% of the prescriptions are modified from popular formulae using local herbs with reference to standard ones. The remaining 32.6% are herbal formulae popular among Taiwanese people; they cannot be traced to any traditional texts or collections of prescriptions but are developed from local experience, such as having betel nut (*binlang* 檳榔), an indigenous product of Taiwan, added to the prescription; see Jin-shiu Sung, “Simiao yaoqian liaoyu wenhua yu jibing de jiangou [The Construction of Healing Power and Illness: A Study of Prescription Divination ‘Yaoqian’],” pp. 64-65. Accordingly, *yaoqian* reflects some unique characteristics regarding prescriptions adoption and medical adaptation in Taiwanese local society.

⁴⁵ Source: Fieldwork conducted in April 2003 at Yufang Tang, Dajia.

(*Yiyao bianlan* 醫藥便覽) to the faithful, and in it, there was a simplified ritual for worshippers in remote areas with no access to temples to obtain *yaoqian* at home with self-made bamboo slips and container. Still, great emphasis is also placed on total surrender to the deities with a pure and respectful heart in order to obtain efficacious prescription divinations.⁴⁶ What is called ‘*jiecheng jinxin tingmingyushen yixin qiufang* 潔誠盡敬聽命於神一心求方’ (seeking for a prescription through total surrender to the deities with a pure and respectful heart) is the moral-cultural foundation by which the faithful self-examine the effectiveness of *yaoqian* they are given. This links collections of *yaoqian* adopted by temples to their divine origins, as well as the ‘authenticity’ of the divine power of *yaoqian* perceived by the faithful.

3. Alienation between Divine Origins and Healing Power

(1) Divine Origins of *Yaoqian* in Taiwan

According to my research survey, temples and shrines of Taiwan house a plethora of *yaoqian*, containing a wide variety of contents such as symptoms, relevant medications, suggested treatments, or even a moral lesson. They are meant for different ailments, comprise different herbs and are presented in different forms and patterns, including *fanglun qian* (方論籤), *fangyao qian* (方藥籤), *kongqian* (空籤), and other ‘odd’ ones.⁴⁷ More importantly, prescription divinations relate to different deity systems of temples under Han Taiwanese

⁴⁶ See Section ‘Ten Do’s and Don’ts for Soliciting *Lüdi Yaoqian*,’ in Zhulin Shuju, ed., *Lüdi lingqian xianfang* [Efficacious General Divination and Prescription Divination from *Lüdi*] (Hsinchu: Taiwan Zhulin Publishing House, 1977).

⁴⁷ In brief, written on *fanglun qian* is an oracle in verse whose interpretation will indicate both symptoms and relevant medications. *Fangyao qian* contains only the medications to be taken but no description of symptoms. *Kongqian* contains neither a prescription nor description of symptoms; rather, a verse with a moral lesson is written on it. Instead of herbal prescriptions or moral lessons, what is written in ‘odd’ ones resembles witchcraft with magic formulae, charms, or rituals given for healing. See Jin-shiu Sung, “Taiwan simiao yaoqian huibian: Yilan ‘yiyashen’ de xitong [Collections of Prescription Divinations from Temples: The System of Medical Gods in Yilan County],” pp. 3-46; Jin-shiu Sung, “Simiao yaoqian liaoyu wenhua yu jibing de jiangou [The Construction of Healing Power and Illness: A Study of Prescription Divination ‘Yaoqian’],” pp. 55-96.

popular religion.⁴⁸

In general, keepers of temples always claim that the adoption of prescription divinations can date back to the establishment of the temple, even to the time when the incense of its premier temple in China was brought over to Taiwan. For example, built around 1647-1683 (the Southern Ming Dynasty), Xingji Gong of Tainan City sees its own collection of *yaoqian* derived from Shangbijiao Ciji Gong (上白礁慈濟宮), Tongan County of Quanzhou Prefecture, Fukien Province, during its establishment in Taiwan.⁴⁹ In other words, though the origin is hard to verify, tracing the history of prescription divinations adopted may lead us to the founding of individual temples. Ever since their establishment hundreds of years ago, these temples have been providing *yaoqian* to the faithful and flocks of worshippers have paid homage to these temples soliciting *yaoqian* for medical answers. The general historical background is mostly related to Han Chinese immigration to Taiwan in Qing Era or, more specifically, an outbreak of plague during the exploitation.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, there remains much to be explored on the socio-historical process of the adoption of prescription divinations for individual temples.

As a whole, *yaoqian* are most often found in temples and shrines dedicated to the three Gods of Medicine, namely Baosheng Dadi, the Great Sovereign Who Protects Life, also known as Dadao Gong (大道公); Shennong Dadi, the God of Agriculture and Medicine, also known as Wugu Wang (五穀王) or Yan Di (炎帝); and Fuyou Dijin, the Reliable Sovereign Who Protects the People, also known as Lüdi (呂帝) or Lüzu (呂祖). There are abundant legends about Gods of Medicine on the themes of illness and treatment.⁵¹ Temples dedicated

⁴⁸ Jin-shiu Sung, "Simiao yaoqian liaoyu wenhua yu jibing de jiangou [The Construction of Healing Power and Illness: A Study of Prescription Divination 'Yaoqian']," pp. 60-65.

⁴⁹ Source: Fieldwork research in Xingji Gong of Tainan City conducted in September 2010; see also Caituanfaren Tainan shi Daguanyin Ting Xingji Gong, ed., *Tainan Shi Daguanyin Ting and Xingji Gong* [An Introduction to Daguanyin Temple and Xingji Temple, Tainan City] (Tainan: Caituanfaren Tainan shi Daguanyin Ting Xingji Gong, 2006), pp. 1, 92-93; Ding-lin Chen, *Baosheng aimin: Fucheng Dingdadao sidian Xingji Gong dinghai nian qingcheng rangzai xieen jian qizhao qingjiao* [Protecting Life: The Seven-Day Thanksgiving Ceremony Held by Xingji Temple of Dingdadao, Tainan City in 2007] (Tainan: Caituanfaren Tainan shi Daguanyin Ting Xingji Gong, 2008), pp. 1-16.

⁵⁰ See Tai-sheng Chen and Zheng-heng Chen, et al., "Taiwan yaoqian de chengqian shijian ji qi yingxiang yinsu [Factors Influencing the Creation of Prescription Divination in Taiwan]"

⁵¹ The definition of the Gods of Medicine, as well as the folklore and legends about Baosheng Dadi Shennong Dadi, and Fuyou Dijun can be found in Jin-shiu Sung, "Taiwan de 'yiyao shen' xinyang [Belief in Medical Gods in Rural Taiwanese Society]," pp. 45-49; Jin-shiu Sung, "Taiwan simiao yaoqian huijian: Yilan 'yiyao shen' de xitong [Collections of Prescription Divinations from Temples: The System of Medical Gods in Yilan County]," pp. 11-13, 18-19.

to the Gods of Medicine constitute the largest prescription divination ‘system’ in Taiwan. Thus, there exists the so-called ‘*Dadaogong qian*’, ‘*Wuguwang qian*’ and ‘*Lüzü qian*’ in Taiwanese local society.

Secondly, temples dedicated to the Goddess of Heaven (Mazu) also dispense prescription divinations to the faithful. For example, Tianhou Gong (天后宮) of Lukang gives out prescription divinations and has a book containing all the prescriptions given; Zhenlan Gong of Dajia serves as the main resort for medical consultation and treatment for worshippers in the neighbouring areas. And thus, there are many ‘*Mazu qian*’, or specifically, ‘*Dajia Mazu qian*’ (大甲媽祖籤).

Temples of other deities such as the Goddess of Mercy (Guanyin 觀音), Buddha (Fozu 佛祖), the God of Chivalry (Sage Emperor Guan; Guansheng Dijun 關聖帝君), the Great Emperor of the East Summit (Dongyue Dadi 東嶽大帝), and Pestilence Gods (Wenshen 瘟神), also dole out prescription divinations.⁵²

In addition, the Goddess of Fertility and Childbirth (Zhusheng Niangniang 註生娘娘), who has power over conception, pregnancy, delivery and childcare, is the deity most women beseeching a child in Taiwan hold in greatest respect. There are also a small number of prescription divinations from her temple that are widely in use. However, the Nanxing Gong (南興宮) of Yilan City, which is the only temple having the Goddess of Fertility and Childbirth as the key deity all over Taiwan, has prescription divinations from the Goddess of Mercy and Buddha, but no specific *yaoqian* from the Goddess of Fertility and Childbirth. The prescription divinations provided by Nanxing Gong comprise 120 *yaoqian* each under the Department of Male (*nanke* 男科) and Department of Female (*nuke* 女科), which were also known among the local as ‘*Fozu qian*’ (佛祖籤).⁵³

⁵² Jin-shiu Sung, “Taiwan simiao yaoqian huibian: Yilan ‘yiyao shen’ de xitong [Collections of Prescription Divinations from Temples: The System of Medical Gods in Yilan County],” pp. 11, 18.

⁵³ Source: Fieldwork research in Nanxing Gong of Nangan Market, Yilan City conducted in November 1998. The keeper of Nanxing Gong, Mrs Li Chang Yue-jiao, and other followers are my key informants. Nanxing Gong is the only temple in Taiwan dedicated to Zhusheng Niangniang with lots of female worshippers coming to pray for conception and foetus-calming. However, during Japanese colonization, according to the official registry of temples under Japanese rule, the key deities venerated were the Goddess of Mercy and Buddha. Hence, the prescription divinations from Nanxing Gong were also known as ‘*Fozu qian*’ among the faithful. With the change in sovereignty and religious policy, the key deity venerated in Nanxing Gong, as stated in the registry, has been changed back to Zhusheng Niangniang. See also Qian You, et al., *Yilanxian minjianxinyang* [Popular Religion in Yilan County] (Yilan: Yilan County Government, 2003), pp. 462-465; Yilan xianzhengfu minzhengju, ed., *Yilanxian simiao zhuanji* [Special Edition on Temples in Yilan County] (Yilan: Bureau of Civil Administration, Yilan County Government, 1979), pp. 192-193, 202-204.

(2) Insights from Lineages of *Yaoqian*

The discussion above reveals that there exists great diversity among the various ‘systems’ of prescription divinations. For example, using solely the divine origins as an index for classifying prescription divinations will only shed light on a single limited perspective of prescription divinations in temples of Taiwan. Indeed, there is no way to specify the substantial details of these prescription divinations according only to the deities venerated in the temple. In order to gain a full picture, I thus try to categorize prescription divinations into different ‘lineages’ (世系群) instead of (deity) ‘systems’ used by Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999).⁵⁴ That is, ‘kinship relations’ were used as criteria in judging which group of *yaoqian* needs to be defined as a ‘lineage’. And thus, some lineages under this framework may merely consist of individual examples given that no other cases have been collected so far. As can be seen, using the ‘lineage’ approach, my research here offers a better categorization of the diversity of the collections of *yaoqian*. More importantly, insights from the different lineages of *yaoqian* highlight the issue of the adoption and re-creation of *yaoqian* in every local setting and its micro-history.

Classification made according to ‘lineages’ involves categorizing the actual data of prescription divinations in terms of their departments, patterns, and contents. Table 1 (see Appendices) lists the lineages of *yaoqian* found in temples of Taiwan to date. These lineages are drawn up according to my fieldwork research conducted in 1996-1997, 2002-2003 and 2011, and the research results of Lin Mei-rong and Li Jun-xiong (1991), Qiu Nian-yong (1993), Shi Zhen-min (1977), Lu Zhao-lin (1998), Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999), and the author (1999, 2011).

As can be seen in Table 1, the prescription divinations dispensed at temples all over Taiwan fall roughly under nine lineages (see also Table 2 - List of Temples, Appendices). Among them, prescription divinations of Lineage I are likely the most widespread and popular. They are *fangyao qian*, with details of

⁵⁴ As seen from their survey research results, Chang Yong-xun et al. came up with eight ‘systems’ of prescription divinations, according to the key deity worshipped in the temple. However, not much has been said on the sampling method employed. From the results published, I can only deduce that the temples surveyed included mainly the more famous ones in Taiwan and the main ones in Miaoli area, Central Taiwan. See Yong-xun Chang, et al., *Taiwan diqu shimiao yaoqian xiankuang zhi diaocha yanjiu* [Investigation of Medical Divinatory Lots Currently Used by Temples in Taiwan Area].

medication written on them but without symptoms of the related illnesses. The most complete collection of Lineage I is that of Daguanyin Ting Xingji Gong Gong, Tainan with 120 prescription divinations under the Department of Adults (*darenke* 大人科), 60 under Paediatrics (*erke* 兒科), 90 under Ophthalmology (*yanke* 眼科), and 60 under the Department of External Medicine (*waike* 外科) (see Figure 1, Appendices). On the other hand, the most widely circulated collection is that of ‘*Mazu qian*’ as seen in my fieldwork area with 120 prescription divinations under the Department of Adults, 60 under Paediatrics, and 84 under Ophthalmology. Those from Zhenlan Gong of Dajia and the later period of Fuxing Gong of Waipu are both *fangyao qian* and belong to this lineage. Lineage I also comprises most likely the earliest collection of prescription divinations all over Taiwan, which is offered at Ciji Gong, Xuejia with 120 prescription divinations under the Department of Internal Medicine (*neike* 內科), and 60 under Paediatrics.

Lineage II contains a wide variety of prescription divinations including *fangyao qian*, *fanglun qian*, *kongqian*, and other ‘odd’ ones. There are 100 prescription divinations under the Department of Male, Gynaecology (*fuke* 婦科), Paediatrics, and the Department of External Medicine, respectively, as well as 53 under Ophthalmology. Those from Wugu Miao of Yilan and Baoan Gong of Sanxing belong to this lineage. This collection is just the *Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi* (*Lüdi xianfang*) published by the Zhulin Publishing House (Zhulin yinshuju 竹林印書局) of Hsinchu, which Fuxing Gong of Sankang Village, Waipu, previously adopted. To some extent, prescription divinations of Lineage II are also as wide-spreading as those of Lineage I (see Section 4).

The only collection belonging to Lineage III is *The Prescription Divination Book from Baoan Temple* (*Baoan Gong yaobu*) from Baoan Gong, Tainan. It is regarded as the most comprehensive one with 100 prescription divinations under the Department of Male including Paediatrics, 50 under the Department of Female, 50 under Gynaecology and Obstetrics (*fuke renchen* 婦科妊娠), and 10 concerning postpartum recuperation (*chanhou* 產後). As can be seen, the medical care provided for women by this collection is the most wide-ranging with many distinct branches.

Lineage IV comprises obviously the prescription divinations of temples dedicated to the Reliable Sovereign Who Protects the People (Fuyou Dijun).

Temples like Zhinan Gong of Muzha and Shengnan Gong (聖南宮) of Qingshui are included in this lineage (see also Table 2 - List of Temples, Appendices). The prescription divinations are *fanglun qian*, with 80 under the Department of Male and Department of Female, respectively. Comparing Lineages III and IV reveals more similarities than differences. For example, the first 50 prescription divinations under the Department of Female in this lineage bear great resemblance to the first 50 prescription divinations under Gynaecology and Obstetrics in *The Prescription Divination Book from Baoan Temple (Baoan Gong yaobu)* in terms of symptoms described and medications used with slight modifications in dosage only. What accounts for their close relationship remains to be explored (see Figure 2, Appendices).

Lineages V-IX are made up of individual cases but showing great discrepancy in contents and are thus regarded as separate lineages, such as Tiannong Miao (天農廟) of Jiaoxi (Lineage V) and Yuanbao Gong (元保宮) of Taichung (Lineage VI) (see Figure 3, Appendices). Moreover, some lineages are often mixed up with the prescription divinations from temples dedicated to the God of Chivalry (Guansheng Dijun) and Respectful Benevolence Master (Enzhu Gong 恩主公);⁵⁵ they can be obtained through *fuluan* (扶鸞) performed by *luansheng* (鸞生) — the initiated members of phoenix halls (*luantang* 鸞堂) — or even through *qiji* (起乩) performed by spirit mediums (*tangki* 童乩 in South Fukien dialect).⁵⁶ For example, Yundong Gong (雲洞宮) of Miaoli (Lineage VIII) and Jishi Gong (濟世宮) of Miaoli (Lineage IX) can be better understood when classified under the tradition of *fuluan* or even *qiji* in Taiwan. *Qiji* is a ritual performed by spirit mediums whose bodies were possessed by the gods; and most *tangki* are illiterate. When performing *qiji*, *tangki* will invoke spirits through placing his hand on the god's carriage, and thus a list of divine prescriptions were prescribed. *Fuluan* is a spirit-writing ritual performed by *luansheng* who are literate in general. Also known as *jiangbi* (降筆), the ritual aims to produce a list of textual medications or treatment derived from the deities answering questions posed by worshippers.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Yaoqian* with this divine origin were generally called 'Dijun qian' (帝君籤) or 'Enzhugong qian' (恩主公籤).

⁵⁶ As can be seen, the affiliation of *luansheng* to phoenix halls is quite different from that of *tangki* who are allocated at local temples. There may exist distinction between their prescriptions prescribed and the knowledge created, which is another issue worth in-depth research.

⁵⁷ Paul Katz, "Spirit-writing and Hakka Migration in Taiwan: A Case Study of the Canzan Tang (參贊堂) in Puli (埔里), Nantou (南投) County," in Wai Lun Tam, eds., *Zhongguo defang zongjiao yishi lunji* [Essays on Chinese Local Religious Rituals] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011), pp. 496-501.

The above-mentioned facts show that *luan* tang, the altar for performing such divination ritual of *fuluan* and *jiangbi*, plays an important role in the circulation of certain sorts of *yaoqian*.⁵⁸

One point worth noting from the classification of Table 1 is that there is no absolute correlation between the patterns and versions of prescription divinations given by a temple and the key deity venerated in that temple. For example, Ciji Gong of Xuejia, Baoan Gong of Sanxing, Baoan Gong of Tainan, and Yuanbao Gong of Taichung (see also Table 2 – List of Temples) are all dedicated to Baosheng Dadi but the prescription divinations they offer to worshippers are all different belonging to Lineages I, II, III, and VI, respectively. On the contrary, Wugu Gong (五穀宮) of Zhunan dedicated to Shennong Dadi and Yuqing Gong (玉清宮) of Miaoli dedicated to Guansheng Dijun have the same prescription divinations belonging to Lineage II. In fact, temples giving prescription divinations of Lineage I are dedicated to different deities including not only the Gods of Medicine like Baosheng Dadi and Shennong Dadi, and even Mazu, but also others such as the Gods of Plague and Epidemic Control from Five Palaces (Wufu Wangye 五府王爺), Marshal of the Central Altar (Zhongtan Yuanshuai 中壇元帥) and Guansheng Dijun, which are the same as those of Lineage II. In other words, there is no way to determine to which lineage these prescription divinations belong according only to the deities venerated in the temple; on the other hand, those prescription divinations belonging to the same lineage must share their relations as branches of the same *yaoqian* family, and even their mutual processes constitute an individual local practice in history.

Another point of interest is that Lineage I shown in Table 1 comprises another version potentially made up of prescription divinations from the Goddess of Heaven. The major temples honouring Mazu including Zhenlan Gong of Dajia, Tianhou Gong of Lukang, Wai Mazu Miao (外媽祖廟) of Hsinchu,⁵⁹ Chaoqing Gong (朝清宮) of Caotun, Nanyao Gong (南瑤宮) of Zhanghua, and Chaotian Gong (朝天宮) of Beigang dispense more or less the same prescription divinations ‘*Mazu qian*’ (see Figure 4, Appendices; see also Table 2 – List of Temples). A more complete collection comprises 120

⁵⁸ In some temples, the prescription divinations from Lüdi were also obtained through the ritual of *fuluan*; see Section 4.

⁵⁹ It is officially known as Changhe Gong (長和宮) in Hsinchu.

prescription divinations under the Department of Adults, 60 under Paediatrics, and 84 under Ophthalmology. The representative collection is that of Zhenlan Gong of Dajia, which was compiled as *Prescription Divinations from the Goddess of Heaven in Dajia Area* (*Dajia tianshang shengmu yaoqian* 大甲天上聖母藥籤) and published by the Association of Dealers of Chinese Herbal Medicine, Dajia region, Taichung County (Taichung xian zhongyao tongye gonghui Dajia qu lianyihui 臺中縣中藥同業公會大甲區聯誼會). Wai Mazu Miao of Hsinchu, Chaoqing Gong of Caotun, and Chaotian Gong of Beigang are all using this complete collection. Moreover, Nanyao Gong of Zhanghua, Donglong Gong of Donggang and the later Fuxing Gong of Waipu (see Figure 5, Appendices) use the partial collection containing prescription divinations under only the Department of Adults and Paediatrics but not those of Ophthalmology; while Tianhou Gong of Lukang and Zhenan Gong (鎮安宮) of Sanxing use the basic 120 prescription divinations without categorizing them under different departments (see Figure 6, Appendices).

In addition, another possible version under Lineage I comprises prescription divinations from Baosheng Dadi (Dadao Gong), the so-called '*Dadaogong qian*'. The representative collection is that of Baoan Gong of Dalongdong (Figure 6), which contains 120 prescription divinations under the Department of Internal Medicine (also noted as the Department of Adults), 36 under Paediatrics, and 36 under the Department of External Medicine. This collection was later edited by Lu Zhao-lin of Beijing University of Chinese Medicine and included in *Interpretations of the Prescription Divinations from Baosheng Dadi in Dalongdong Area* (*Dalongdong Baoan Gong Baosheng Dadi yaoqian jie* 大龍峒保安宮保生大帝藥籤解). The 120 prescription divinations under the Department of Internal Medicine are the most widely used. Most major temples dedicated to the Great Sovereign Who Protects Life (Baosheng Dadi) including Zhenan Gong of Sanxing (Figure 6), Qingan Gong (慶安宮) of Zhanghua (Figure 5), Xingji Gong of Tainan, as well as Ciji Gong and Huiji Gong (惠濟宮) of Xuejia use these 120 basic prescription divinations, which were also included and published in *Annotations for Efficacious Divinations of Temples in Taiwan* (*Quansheng simiao lingqian zhujie* 全省寺廟靈籤註解).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ See Daocheng jushi, ed., *Quansheng simiao lingqian zhujie* [Annotations for Efficacious Divinations of Temples in Taiwan], 6 volumes. (Tainan: Zhenghai Publishing House, 1988).

In sum, instead of being absolute and exclusive, prescription divinations from temples dedicated to Mazu (Tianshang Shengmu), Baosheng Dadi (Dadao Gong), Shennong Dadi (Wugu Wang) and Fuyou Dijin (Lüzü) were used interchangeably in popular practice — *Mazu qian*, *Dadaogong qian* and *Lüzü qian* could be adopted convertibly by these temples, as shown in Table 2, Appendices.

4. Authority and Practice: *Yaoqian* in History

As seen in Table 1, there exist differences in terms of the department, content, and the number of prescription divinations in Lineages I and II, respectively. Three reasons can account for such differences. First of all, early prescription divinations are handwritten and errors may arise when copying the contents manually. Secondly, some of the herbs listed may not have been available in Taiwan and were then replaced by local substitutes. Thirdly, since some temple keepers are also familiar with the use of herbs, they may have modified the prescriptions, especially those imported from the premier temple in China, with local herbs found in the region. For instance, Lineage VI contains only the 127 *Dadaogong qian* from Yuanbao Gong of Taichung. However, the first 120 prescription divinations are the basic ones also found in other lineages, while the remaining ones are new additions of local formulae popular in Taiwan composed of indigenous herbs like *huoxiang* (藿香/ *Pogostemon cablin*) and *fengweicao* (鳳尾草/ *Pteris ensiformis Burmann*).⁶¹ Still, similar prescriptions adopted and adaptation of medications unique to Taiwan can be found in *yaoqian* across different lineages, which merit further exploration in the future.

Apart from the variations in herbs used, the dosage of the prescriptions in the same collection under the same lineage also differs sometimes. For instance, in Lineage I, two herbs, *huaishan* (淮山/ *Dioscorea opposita*; also known as *shanyao* 山藥) and *jinying* (金英/ *Galphimia glauca Cav.*), are missing in Prescription Divination No. 3 from Zhenan Gong of Sanxing, compared with the same *qian* from Baoan Gong of Dalongdong, Zhenlan Gong of Dajia, and

⁶¹ Source: Fieldwork research conducted in June-October 1997. See also Yong-xun Chang, et al., *Taiwan diqu shimiao yaoqian xiankuang zhi diaocha yanjiu* [Investigation of Medical Divinatory Lots Currently Used by Temples in Taiwan Area], pp. 14, 42, 138-155 for details.

Chaotian Gong of Beigang. Similar examples can be found in Lineage II and Lineage VIII. Though all three being *kongqian*, Prescription Divination No. 89 under the Department of Gynaecology from Baoan Gong of Sanxing as well as Yuqing Gong and Yundong Gong of Miaoli contain more or less the same moral teaching,⁶² only with the latter two having an additional efficacious charm prescribed.⁶³

As a matter of fact, the same collection of prescription divinations may have different names in different regions due to local adaptations as mentioned above, or even, because the temples that offer *yaoqian* venerate different deities.

For instance, in Lineage I, the 120 prescription divinations under the Department of Adults are regarded as the common basis widely circulated among the temples in the same lineage all over Taiwan. In Dajia area, this collection is known as *Dajia Mazu qian* and later included in *Prescription Divinations from the Goddess of Heaven in Dajia Area* edited and published in 1981 by the Association of Dealers of Chinese Herbal Medicine, Dajia region, Taichung County. This example also serves to illustrate the role of the local gentry and Chinese medicine practitioners in fostering the circulation of *yaoqian*. However, this collection of *Mazu qian* is known as *Wuguwang qian* among worshippers of the God of Agriculture and Medicine (Shennong Dadi, Wugu Wang or Yandi) venerated in Fuxing Gong, my fieldwork site of Sankang Village, Waipu (see below). Moreover, it is called *Yandi qian* by the faithful of Shengxian Gong (聖賢宮) of Wufeng, Taichung County, also dedicated to the God of Agriculture and Medicine. This same collection is also named *Dadaogong qian* by the congregations at Baoan Gong of Dalongdong, Taipei, and Ciji Gong of Xuejia, Tainan, who worship Baosheng Dadi (Dadao Gong), and termed as *Dadaogong qian* in the collection *Annotations for Efficacious Divinations of Temples in Taiwan* published by Zhenghai Publishing House.⁶⁴

As mentioned earlier, the adoption of prescription divinations can date back to the establishment of the temple, with some coming originally from the

⁶² Prescription Divination No. 89 under the Department of Gynaecology from Baoan Gong of Sanxing states: “事到無何叩老仙，和平全在立心田；欲求妙藥多行善，一念精誠可格天” while that of Yundong Gong and Yuqing Gong of Miaoli states: “事到無何叩老仙，和平全在立心田，一念精誠可格天；平時要做善”.

⁶³ Yong-xun Chang, et al., *Taiwan diqu shimiao yaoqian xiankuang zhi diaocha yanjiu* [Investigation of Medical Divinatory Lots Currently Used by Temples in Taiwan Area], p. 101.

⁶⁴ See Daocheng jushi, ed., *Quansheng simiao lingqian zhujie* [Annotations for Efficacious Divinations of Temples in Taiwan].

premier temple in China. However, the same collection of prescription divinations may be given different names, and the collections within the same lineage can have variations and adaptations. Hence, there is no way to deduce from the collections of *yaoqian* the deity they are attributed to, nor predict the contents of *yaoqian* according to the lineage to which they are classified. I refer to this phenomenon as ‘alienation’ between the title given and deities venerated of the collections of *yaoqian*. On the one hand, it clearly shows the dissimilation of *yaoqian* between its divine origin and healing power in the context of solicitation. On the other hand, it also highlights that the decision on which collection of *yaoqian* was to be adopted by individual temple was a strategy influenced by the historical-social process. For every individual temple, the collection of *yaoqian* is a product of social history.

The fact of ‘alienation’ can fully explain why and how different collections of *yaoqian* were handled by the Fuxing Gong of Sankang in its micro-history. Fuxing Gong once adopted some of the prescription divinations from its premier temple Wugu Gong (五穀宮) dedicated to Wugu Wang when it was founded, but later, the prescription divinations from Dajia Mazu, Zhenlan Gong of Dajia, were used instead. Mr. Zeng Fu-lang (曾富郎) (1942-), chairman of the Fuxing Gong Committee and village head of Sankang (1983-2002, serving five terms of office), detailed as follows the changes in the course of prescription divinations adopted by Fuxing Gong.⁶⁵

[Narrative 2] Fuxing Gong was built in 1925 during the Japanese Colonial Era. Our premier temple here in Taiwan is Wugu Gong on the Five-Crane Mountain, Miaoli County [Central Taiwan], which was established by the Liu clan, the major clan of the earliest immigrants of our village of Hakka descent from Guangdong Province, Mainland China. This is why, after World War II, if we have sufficient fund, we will always make a long journey back to Wugu Gong every fourth month of the lunar calendar. We have not paid homage to Wugu Gong for four years. However, our villagers still join the annual pilgrimage celebrating Dajia Mazu’s birthday every lunar third month, just as in the past.

We got the *Wuguwang qian* from our premier temple Wugu Gong and there have been many cases showing that *Wuguwang qian* are very efficacious. We consider that the *Wuguwang qian* collected by Fuxing Gong are prescription divinations truly granted from Wugu Wang. The prescription divinations contain oracles in verse on illnesses, symptoms, and medications to be taken. There was once a

⁶⁵ Source: Fieldwork research in Sankang Village and Fuxing Gong of Sankang, Waipu, in 2003. Interview data were mainly recorded on 16th March and 23rd April, 2003.

temple keeper capable of interpreting oracles for people as he could read Chinese characters. Unfortunately, after he passed away, his successors cannot offer the service anymore, and even the initial collection of our *Wuguwang qian* was lost some twenty years ago. However, since our villagers visit Zhenlan Gong of Dajia frequently for soliciting *Dajia Mazu qian* [the most authoritative *yaoqian* with the widest circulation in Rural Dajia Community], our committee has finally decided to adopt *Prescription Divinations from the Goddess of Heaven in Dajia Area (Dajia tianshang shengmu yaoqian)* as our prescription divinations, for the sake of popularity and convenience. Our current collection of *Mazu qian* was also copied manually from the initial one.

According to our analysis of the lineages of *yaoqian* found in temples of Taiwan (see Table 1), it is evident that the initial collection of *Wuguwang qian* adopted by Fuxing Gong should be *Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi (Lüdi xianfang)* with the pattern of *fanglun qian* (Linage II). That is, this so-called ‘*Wuguwang qian*’ by the faithful of Fuxing Gong is indeed the *Lüdi qian* dedicated to Fuyou Dijin (Lüdi). *Lüdi xianfang* refers to the early collection of *yaoqian* which Fuxing Gong of Sankang adopted, and it is one of the most representative collections of *yaoqian* among different lineages across Taiwan (see also Table 2, Appendices). The above-mentioned also shows clearly that the later collection Fuxing Gong adopted is indeed the *Mazu qian*. It is from the same collection as *Prescription Divinations from the Goddess of Heaven in Dajia Area* kept by Zhenlan Gong in Dajia with the pattern of *fangyao qian* (see Linage I, Table 1). However, for the faithful of Fuxing Gong, this collection was still called ‘*Wuguwang qian*’ and entitled anew as *The Prescription Divination Book from Wugu Wang, Fuxing Gong, Sankang Village (Fuxinggong Wuguwang qian 福興宮五穀王籤)*.

As with historical factors given above, the impact of social factors on the adoption of prescription divination collection should not be ignored. So for instance, among the temples dedicated to Mazu and the Gods of Medicine, it is common to find that *Lüdi qian* were used interchangeably with *Mazu qian* and *Dadaogong qian* due to the broad circulation of *Lüdi xianfang* published by Zhulin Publishing House, in particular, the 1977 edition. Indeed, the extensive adoption of *Lüdi qian* by local temples contributes to the wide circulation of *Lüdi xianfang*. For example, in Baoan Gong of Sanxing, Yilan County, which is a famous local temple dedicated to Dadao Gong, the prescription divinations from Lüdi are given rather than those of Dadao Gong. The spokesman of Baoan Gong of Sanxing explained that the initial collection adopted by the temple

dated back to the Qing Dynasty when the temple was founded. It was just the same as that used by Baoan Gong of Dalongdong, Taipei, its premier temple, but was lost when on loan around the 1980s. Since then, the 1977 version of *Lüdi xianfang* has been employed instead. Again, when this 1977 edition was lost several years ago, the 2005 edition of *Lüdi xianfang* collected in *Complete Collection of Annotations for the Divination Oracles of China and Taiwan* (*Zhongguo qianshijie daquan* 中國籤詩解大全), which was edited by Gao Ming-de and published by Hualin Press, Tainan City, was introduced.⁶⁶ This case reveals that though historical ties with the premier temple may determine which collection of prescription divination is to be adopted, the influence of printing and the printing press has also contributed to the widespread circulation of the published versions, which helps establish their high status as the sample collection of authority.

The earliest printed copy of *Lüdi xianfang* I obtained in fieldwork conducted at Baoan Gong of Sanxing in 1997 was titled *Efficacious General Divinations and Prescription Divinations from Lüdi* (*Lüdi lingqian xianfang* 呂帝靈籤仙方) (1977). As its name implies, it comprises both general divinations (*yunqian*) and prescription divinations (*yaoqian*) from Lüdi; and thus the former is entitled separately as *Lüdi lingqian*, and the latter, *Lüdi xianfang*. It is the most extensively distributed version in Taiwan and was published and reprinted by the Zhulin Publishing House of Hsinchu with several editions. The 1977 edition is beyond doubt the most popular in the circle (see below).

Its former edition appeared back in 1951, with 1000 copies printed under the title *Efficacious Prescription Divinations of Extensive Benefaction* (*Boji xianfang* 博濟仙方). The publisher of the 1951 edition is not known. However, it was stated very clearly in the preface of this edition that the collection compiled both *yunqian* and *yaoqian* from the previous 1918 edition printed by Linshu Publishing House (Linshu Ge 麟書閣) in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province of China. Tracing their origins reveals that both *yaoqian* from the 1918 and 1951 editions were obtained through spirit-writing rituals performed

⁶⁶ Source: Fieldwork research in Baoan Gong of Sanxing, Yilan County conducted in April 1997 and April-May 2011. See also Xin-ru Cai, "Huang Cai-long, You Jin-sheng xiansheng fangtanlu: Weiqian Baoangong Baosheng Dadi yiliao yishi [Records of Interview with Mr. Huang Cai-long and Mr. You Jin-sheng: Medical Anecdotes about 'the Great Sovereign Who Protects Life' of Baoan Temple in Weiqian Village]," *Yilan Wenxian* [The Yilan Journal of History] 37 (January 1999), pp. 91-93.

by initiated members of *luanfang* (phoenix halls) for the divine medications prescribed, as found in temples dedicated to Guansheng Dijun and Enzhu Gong across Taiwan. According to an original preface of *Boji xianfang* (1918) attached to the 1951 edition, which was written by a follower of *luanfang* dedicated to Lüdi, it is clear that the divine medications of the 1918 edition were prescribed by Lüdi and printed by this *luanfang*.⁶⁷ More specifically, the 1951 version of *Lüdi xianfang* was also reprinted with support from the followers of Shenxiu Tang (慎修堂) at Shilin, Taipei.⁶⁸ Hence, *luanfang*, the altar where such divination ritual of spirit-writing was performed, served as a performative mediator, which thus played an important role in the establishment and spread of the authority of *Lüdi xianfang*.

Again, both the 1951 and 1977 editions of *Lüdi xianfang* found in Taiwan bear great resemblance to the collection of *Lüzü qian* published by Cheng Xiang-ji Publishing House (Cheng Xiangji shuju 陳湘記書局), Hong Kong;⁶⁹ *Lüdi xianfang* is commonly well known as *Lüzü qian* (呂祖籤) in the Cantonese-speaking area. This collection of *Lüzü qian* of Hong Kong is also published under the title *Efficacious Prescription Divinations of Extensive Benefaction (Boji xianfang)* edited by Cheng Shao-xiu in the eastern Guangdong Province. However, the year when it was first published cannot be verified.

As a whole, resemblance was found in several dimensions between *Lüdi xianfang*, Zhulin edition of Taiwan and *Lüzü qian*, Chen Xiangji edition of Hong Kong, under the Department of Male and Gynaecology. They both include descriptions of symptoms and related illness, medications prescribed, as well as dosage of the medications. Examples with total coincidence include

⁶⁷ As for the details about the medications prescribed in this 1918 edition, Xie Cong-hui speculated according to the information of this preface only that their circulation originated from North China, through the east Guangdong Province, to the immigrant society of Taiwan; see Cong-hui Xie, et al., “Taiwan yaoqian Lüdi xianfang de yuanyuan yu chuancheng chutan [Preliminary Research on Origin and Transmission of Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi],” pp. 211-213. Such speculation is of great importance in exploring the local adaptation of *yaoqian* in Taiwan. However, I do not incline to agree with Xie since the information provided in the preface is too limited. So far, there exist no copies of the 1918 edition of Linshu Ge in Taiwan, rendering it impossible for any substantial comparison to be made.

⁶⁸ The original text of the preface is about ‘Motive for Reprinting *Boji xianfang*’: “本聖編原本，係因同仁等，於士林慎修堂，恭請闡著……計四部真經，並玉闕元音寶卷，中恭承糾察司陸恩師傳示，奉南宮恩主聖意，稱：恩主曾親著醫書乙冊（係本聖編）現板藏於松山，府城隍廟內，藥方既簡，效驗極大，且每方個別，論証甚詳，須乘此良機，抄錄附刊於玉闕元音，定能活人不_少云……”。

⁶⁹ Source: Author’s fieldwork survey in Central and Wanchai Districts of Hong Kong, 1997.

Prescription Divination No. 2 under Gynaecology mentioning health problems caused by worry and undue contemplation.⁷⁰ Examples with minute difference include Nos. 9, 12, 13 and 14, Gynaecology. Apart from the two versions containing identical details in the description of symptoms and the medications prescribed to be taken, they have only slight differences in dosage, such as having one more *qian* (錢)⁷¹ added or deleted to the prescriptions containing *sangjisheng* (桑寄生/ *Taxillus chinensis*), *chunshahua* (春砂花/ *Eletteria cardamomum* Maton; also known as *sharen* 砂仁), *chuanbei* (川貝/ *Fritillaria cirrhosa* D. Don) and *nüzhenzi* (女貞子/ *Ligustrum lucidum* Ait), respectively (see Figure 7, Appendices).⁷²

Moreover, a new edition of *Efficacious General Divinations and Prescription Divinations from Lüdi* (*Lüdi lingqian xianfang*) with interpretations added, which was edited by Li Fu-shan and Cai Mao-tang, was published in 1974 in Taiwan under the title *Interpretations of Efficacious Prescription Divinations of Extensive Benefaction* (*Boji xianfang zhujie* 博濟仙方註解).⁷³ Another compilation that contains both general divinations and prescription divinations from Lüdi is just *Annotations for Efficacious Divinations of Temples in Taiwan* published by Zhenghai Press, Tainan in 1988.⁷⁴ In addition, though relevant versions of the 1977 edition of *Lüdi xianfang* cannot be fully verified, it is certain that the 7th edition was printed by Zhulin Publishing House in March 1989 and the 12th edition published in May 2002 was the latest version. The most current *Lüdi xianfang* in Taiwan is that collected in *Complete Collection of Annotations for the Divination Oracles of China and Taiwan* published by Hualin Press, Tainan in 2005.⁷⁵ All the above-mentioned *Lüdi xianfang* printed

⁷⁰ Prescription Divination No. 2 states “堪笑夫人心太癡，勞心傷血欲求醫；老仙賜用金丹服，拋憂息惱見生機。首烏二錢半……酒草、川芎各錢半，加大棗為引”。

⁷¹ *Qian* is a Chinese unit of weight equal to 5 grams.

⁷² Still, a more complete comparison between *Lüdi xianfang* of Taiwan and *Lüzü qian* of Hong Kong including Paediatrics, Ophthalmology, and the Department of External Medicine merits further exploration in the future. Such comparison may contribute much to our discussion on the source collection of Taiwanese *Lüdi xianfang*, as well as the localization of *yaoqian* in Taiwan.

⁷³ Shōji Yoshimoto, *Taiwan simiao yaoqian yanjiu* [Research on Prescription Divinations from Taiwanese Temples], pp. 116-118.

⁷⁴ Daocheng jushi, ed., *Quansheng simiao lingqian zhujie* [Annotations for Efficacious Divinations of Temples in Taiwan], pp. 3-110, 111-190.

⁷⁵ Ming-de Gao, ed., *Zhongguo qianshijie daquan* [Complete Collection of Annotations for the Divination Oracles of China and Taiwan] (Tainan: Hualin Press, 2005), pp. 212-288.

in Taiwan were based on the 1951 edition; and they are identical to each other without any additions or deletions at all.

Over more than some sixty years, at least, with such many editions published and widely circulated, *Lüdi xianfang* is beyond doubt the most influential collection of prescription divinations in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Guangdong area.

Other cases also reveal that though historical ties with the premier temple (as well as changes in timeline) may determine which collection of prescription divination is to be adopted, the influence of printing and the performative mediator of *luanfang* have also contributed to the widespread circulation of the published versions of *yaoqian*, which helps establish their high status as the sample collection of authority. Being a public space specific to perform traditional divination ritual of *fuluan*, *luanfang* dispensed the medications prescribed. Still, the prescription divination book adopted by *luanfang* was mostly handed by the authorities of the altar, who were the sole literates to read the text; only male literates have the authority to decide which published collection of *yaoqian* was to be accepted. Thus, the knowledge of prescription divinations transmitted at *luanfang* by such authorities or local gentry — all males — is of great significance in exploring the sources of Taiwanese prescription divinations as well as the associated local adaptation in the ear of Han immigration to Taiwan. All these issues merit more in-depth investigation.

Recent statistical data have shown that there were roughly 7414 ‘Taoist’ temples and 1652 ‘Buddhist’ temples in Taiwan during the 1990s. Among them, 400 dispensed prescription divinations to the faithful.⁷⁶ Of the 38 temples and shrines dedicated to the three Gods of Medicine in Yilan and Taichung County, my random survey conducted among 18 temples shows that over half of them have always catered for the requests from worshippers for prescription divinations. These temples have maintained till now collections of prescriptions, prescription divinations, or related books and treasuries. Some of them have certain legends related to *yaoqian* or medical services provided.

⁷⁶ This observation was made by Yong-xun Chang et al. according to the official statistics of 1998 from the Ministry of the Interior, Executive Yuan. However, further details need to be verified. See Yong-xun Chang, et al., *Taiwan diqu shimiao yaoqian xiankuang zhi diaocha yanjiu* [Investigation of Medical Divinatory Lots Currently Used by Temples in Taiwan Area].

As I learned from fieldwork, the heyday of this service with great demand for prescription divinations lasted from the period of the localization of immigrant Han communities established in the mid-Qing Taiwan (the late 18th century), through the Japanese Colonial Era, to the 1970s. Soliciting *yaoqian* was still very popular in colonial Taiwan such that severe criticism of *yaoqian* and their prohibition were discussed in newspaper articles in 1919 and 1924, respectively. According to *The New Taiwan Daily News* (*Taiwan Nichi nichu Sinbō* 臺灣日日新報), “The Japanese authority condemns soliciting *yaoqian* as superstition, which entails troubles to the supplicants who ask the gods for *yaoqian* instead of seeking doctors. The keeper of Xingji Gong was thus reprimanded. Then bamboo slips, printing plates, and the prescriptions adopted by the temple were all expropriated” (date: 1919/3/1); “*Yaoqian* is deemed as a hazard by the authority. It has been strictly forbidden across the Island except in Taipei and Hsinchu State, yet the policy will come into effect in Taipei soon” (date: 1924/9/18).⁷⁷

Despite being banned during the Kominka movement in the late Japanese Colonial Era, people resorted to their deities for divination concerning their suffering and illnesses and “practised prescription divinations in secret”, as reported by informants Mr. Huang Qing-song (黃慶松) (1912-)⁷⁸ and other elders of Sankang as follows.

⁷⁷ Source: The fourth printed page, 1st March 1919 and 18th September 1924, respectively, in *The New Taiwan Daily News*. The individual text is as follows: “「收押靈籤」(臺南興濟宮……香火甚盛，廟內置有籤詩藥籤。每日自上午四五點起，入廟求籤問卜者，絡繹不絕……尤以鄉人貧民為多)……然當道深恐迷信太過，不延醫誤服方劑，貽害不淺。故特召廟祝……嚴為說諭，並將案頭竹籤印板藥方等，概為收押云”；“「寺廟藥籤將禁」(從來島內各處寺廟，多置藥籤)……是故當局，認為有害。除臺北新竹而外，皆已嚴禁。然而臺北不久，亦將嚴禁(……雖曰無害，惟屬在無智識者，則往往誤事。當局之嚴禁，至為同感也)”。In addition, the prohibition against *yaoqian* was also due in part to Japanese ‘modern’ idea of hygiene; see Xiao-mei Jiang, “神籤[The Efficacious Divinations],” *Minsu Taiwan* [Folklore Taiwan] 3(1 (January 1943), pp.16-17.

⁷⁸ Born in 1912, Mr. Huang Qing-song is the eldest villager in Sankang; he was 92 years old at the time of our interview in 2003. In addition, Mr. Huang is one of the most respected residents in Sankang; he has lived in Sankang for more than 80 years since his father migrated from the adjacent Miaoli County in the 1920s, and has served as a delegate of his home villagers for several terms of office. Mr. Huang is very knowledgeable about ritual practices and textual knowledge. There was no better learned man than Mr. Huang among his contemporaries.

[Narrative 3] Prescription divinations from our Fuxing Gong were, and are, very effective. Through power from deities, *yaoqian* can offer cures for illnesses, such as cold, fever, shock, and the disturbance of *qi* (氣) [the vitality of a human being]. Prescription divinations of our temple dated back to the generation of my father, Huang A-li (1885-?), and had been very popular in the Japanese Colonial Era. Although the Japanese government had banned their use, there was no way for the police force to have complete intervention in minute details of everyday life. We villagers still practised prescription divinations in secret. On seeing someone being cured after taking the prescription, others may seek advice and follow suit, coming to the temple for prescription divinations.

Established in the course of immigrant history, *yaoqian* as a medical practice with healing power was indeed one of the predominant practices in rural Taiwan until the 1970s. Most temples in my fieldwork area acknowledge the fact that there has been a marked decline in the number and frequency of worshippers seeking prescription divinations now compared with two decades ago. In addition, legislation enacted after the 1970s concerning medical practice and drug prescription has caused temples to be more cautious in dispensing prescription divinations. In some temples like Fuxing Gong at Sankang Village of Waipu and Zhenlan Gong of Dajia, the *yaoqian* containers have been removed from the front hall and placed in a rather secluded area. Requests from worshippers for prescription divinations will only be catered for after they state clearly their intention of use to the temple. Nevertheless, as observed in my fieldwork research as above, the authority and effectiveness of *yaoqian* as a medical practice among the rural people has never been undermined by the changing social conditions or the reduced frequency of its use.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Cai Ming-xiong once attributed the ‘vanishing’ of *yaoqian* in contemporary Taiwan to the changing medical authorities. This still requires further elaboration; see Ming-xiong Cai, “Xiaoshizhong de minsu yiliao: Yaoqian zai Taiwan minjian shehui fazhan chutan [The Impending Fate of Divinatory Prescription: A Preliminary Report of a Healing Ritual in Taiwan Folk Beliefs],” pp. 61-64. Chen Wen-ning offered more insight into this issue. Apart from discussing the accessibility to medical resources and the diversity of social settings, Chen considered all the variables in age, religious preference, and medical experience of the supplicants, as well as the influence of their referral group; see Wen-ning Chen, “Shimiao minsu liaofa zhi tanjiu: Yi qiuyaoqian de zuguan jingyan weili [A Study of the Temple’s Folk Medicine: The Subjective Experience of Wishing for Pharmaceutical Lots],” pp. 70-100. It is absolutely a good starting point for exploring the key factors affecting current development of *yaoqian* in Taiwan.

5. Conclusion

As mentioned, I seek to explore in this paper the production of medical knowledge in light of the adoption and re-creation of prescription divinations in Taiwan, which entails an interrogation of the relation between authority, practice and history.

In the first part of this paper, I elaborated on a series of procedures for empowering/authorizing the efficacy which the solicitation of *yaoqian* involved. First, it is noteworthy that the efficacy in soliciting *yaoqian* was perceived through a series of standard procedures with self-examination and easy access. Among the procedures, the casting of wooden blocks serves as a cultural mechanism crucial for knowing what is unknown and obtaining multiple divine confirmations. In view of the standard procedures, the solicitation of *yaoqian* is more institutionalized than other religious medicine with someone acting as spirit medium or healer. With full grasp of the procedures, such divination practitioners become equipped with healing power.

Moreover, the solicitation of *yaoqian* is an act of divination established on the basis of morality and godliness of the worshippers. To the faithful soliciting *yaoqian*, the choice of adopting the prescribed medication and treatment is not solely due to the effectiveness of the prescriptions, but more because of the deity's approval of their petitions. Although treatment given by *yaoqian* has to rely on a physical basis such as prescriptions, true 'healing' is only achieved through divine confirmation identifying a culturally recognised and understandable underlying aetiology of the illness.⁸⁰ This is what Strathern and Stewart called 'the philosophy of healing' that religious medicine, alternative medicine and the medical systems of all kinds in various cultures⁸¹ depend on, in contrast to the 'curing' effect offered by most biomedicine.⁸² It seems that

⁸⁰ The aetiology is often closely related to cosmology, morality and value system of that culture; see also Hsun Chang, *Jibing yu wenhua* [Illness and Culture] (Taipei: Daoxiang Publishing Ins., 1994), pp. 17-24.

⁸¹ These surely include Western biomedicine, which also has 'the philosophy of healing'.

⁸² As Strathern and Stewart pointed out, curing refers to an act of treating successfully a specific condition, for example a wound or a case of diarrhoea, while healing concerns the entire person or the whole body seen as an integrated system with both physical and spiritual components; see Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart, *Curing and Healing: Medical Anthropology in Global Perspective*. This distinction matches, to

there is a ‘suggestive’ function of *yaoqian* in certain illness experience, which resembles ‘the placebo effect’.⁸³ This also highlights the important issue of ‘the interplay between elements of curing and healing’⁸⁴ found in *yaoqian*, which merits further research.

As a whole, *yaoqian* have been embedded in culture and been working effectively throughout history. It is beyond various arrangements which temples provided for the solicitation, beyond slight differences in the series of procedures, and even, beyond the boundary of the deities venerated. Given the very existence of medical pluralism in rural Taiwan — where local medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, and Western biomedicine not only co-exist but are interdependent — the practice of the solicitation might be much simplified to meet changing social conditions, such as those found in Zhenlan Gong and Fuxing Gong of rural Dajia community. However, for those seeking medical answers from soliciting *yaoqian*, the variations/alienation did not invoke cultural change in undermining the healing efficacy of *yaoqian*. Throughout Section 3 and Section 4 of this paper, the ‘authenticity’ of the divine power perceived by the faithful was examined wherein the ‘suggestive’ function of *yaoqian* may set to work. The twin foci of ‘authenticity’ also meet in demystifying the knowledge of *yaoqian*.

On the one hand, I explored the process whereby the authority of certain collections of *yaoqian* had been established as a sample collection in the course of social history, and thus the fluidity and diversity of the knowledge was disclosed. By using the ‘lineage’ approach instead of divine origin ‘system’, I suggested in Section 3 that there exists ‘alienation’ between divine origins and healing power of *yaoqian*. There is no absolute correlation between the patterns and versions of prescription divinations given by a temple and the key deity venerated in that temple; there is no way to determine to which lineage these

some extent, with that between disease and illness. However, this classificatory model of distinction is oversimplified.

⁸³ See Daniel E. Moerman, *Meaning, Medicine, and the ‘Placebo Effect’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). “Placebos are inert and, therefore, don’t do anything. But they can be meaningful.” This implies that placebos can yield different meaningful responses that can be “the psychological and physiological effects of meaning in the treatment of illness which engages the biological consequences of experiencing knowledge, symbol, and meaning”.

⁸⁴ Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart, *Curing and Healing: Medical Anthropology in Global Perspective*.

prescription divinations belong according only to the deities venerated in the temple. Indeed, there is no *Dadaogong qian*, *Wuguwang qian*, *Lüzü qian* or *Mazu qian* in essence, since most *Mazu qian*, *Dadaogong qian* and *Lüzü qian* were used interchangeably by those temples dedicated to the three Gods of Medicine (*yi yao shen*) and the Goddess of Heaven (Mazu).

On the other hand, I explored the relation between authority and practice behind the solicitation of *yaoqian*, which the ‘alienation’ phenomena mentioned above can be further exemplified. With my lineage analysis, I noted in Section 4 that the decision on which collection of *yaoqian* was to be adopted by an individual temple was influenced by historical ties with its premier temple, as well as the changes in timeline. Moreover, the impact of social factors on the adoption and re-creation of *yaoqian* collections is of great importance. Temple keepers, members of executive committees, oracles interpreters, and Chinese medicine practitioners might serve as mediators in molding the knowledge of *yaoqian* — the group of local authorities and individual specialists consist solely of men. These key actors on producing the knowledge and practice, and the roles they play, merit a full exploration in the near future.

However, I acknowledged primarily in this paper that the influence of printing and the performative mediator of phoenix halls have contributed to this production, in particular in the course of immigrant history of Taiwan. For example, the widespread circulation of *Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi (Lüdi xianfang)* with many editions published did help establish its high status as the sample collection of authority in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Guangdong Province. Moreover, the initiated members of phoenix halls or local gentry with textual knowledge administrating the halls are crucial to the transmission and local adaptation of *yaoqian* knowledge, particularly in the ear of Han immigration to Taiwan. It clearly shows that medical knowledge of Taiwanese *yaoqian* was created “in particular contexts and in changing arrangements of power”.⁸⁵ Still, the relationship between phoenix halls and local gentry needs to be thoroughly examined for a further exploration of *yaoqian* in the early phases of history.

⁸⁵ See Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds., *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*.

Appendices

Table 1 - Lineages of *Yaoqian* Found in Temples of Taiwan

Lineage	Temple	Key Deity	Department & Total No. of Prescription	Sources
<i>fangyao</i> pattern	Xingji Gong [臺南]興濟宮	Baosheng Dadi	Adult- 120 Paediatrics- 60 Ophthalmology- 90 External Medicine - 60	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System I
	Zhenan Gong [三星]鎮安宮	Baosheng Dadi	No distinct departments – 120	Sung Jin-shiu (1999)
	Baoan Gong [大龍峒]保安宮	Baosheng Dadi	Internal Medicine- 120 Paediatrics- 36 External Medicine- 36	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System I Lu Zhao-lin (1998) Author's fieldwork, 1997
	Wai Mazu Miao [新竹]外媽祖廟	Mazu	Adult- 120 Paediatrics- 60 Ophthalmology- 84	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System I Author's fieldwork, 2011
	Zhenlan Gong [大甲]鎮瀾宮	Mazu	<i>ditto</i>	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System I Author's fieldwork, 1997, 2003
	Fuxing Gong [外埔]福興宮	Shennong Dadi	Adult- 120 Paediatrics- 60	Author's fieldwork, 2003
	Shengxian Gong [霧峰]聖賢宮	Shennong Dadi	Adult- 120 Female- 60 Paediatrics- 60	Author's fieldwork, 1997
	Chaoqing Gong [草屯]朝清宮	Mazu	Adult- 120 Paediatrics- 60 Ophthalmology- 84	Lin Mei-rong & Li Jun-xiong (1991)
	Tianhou Gong [鹿港]天后宮	Mazu	No distinct departments – 120	Xu Xue-ji
	Qingan Gong [彰化]慶安宮	Baosheng Dadi	No distinct departments – 120	Yang Ling
	Nanyao Gong [彰化]南瑤宮	Mazu	Adult- 120 Paediatrics- 60	Lin Mei-rong & Li Jun-xiong (1991)
	Chaotian Gong [北港]朝天宮	Mazu	Adult- 120 Paediatrics- 60 Ophthalmology- 84	Shi Zhen-min (1977) Lin Mei-rong & Li Jun-xiong (1991) Author's fieldwork, 2002
	Daitian Fu [北門]代天府	Wufu Wangye	Adult- 120 Paediatrics- 60 Ophthalmology- 91	Lin Mei-rong & Li Jun-xiong (1991)
	Ciji Gong [學甲]慈濟宮	Baosheng Dadi	Internal Medicine- 120 Paediatrics- 60	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System I
	Huiji Gong [學甲]惠濟宮	Baosheng Dadi	Internal Medicine- 120	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System I

	Taizi Gong [新營]太子宮	Zhongtan Yuanshuai	Adult- 120 Female- 64 Paediatrics- 60 Ophthalmology- 96	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System I
	Donglong Gong [東港]東隆宮	Mazu	Adult- 120 Paediatrics- 60	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System I
	Wenheng Dian [潮州]文衡殿	Guansheng Dijun	Adult- 120	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System I
Lineage II <i>fanglun</i> and <i>fangyao</i> pattern etc.	Wugu Miao [宜蘭]五穀廟	Shennong Dadi	Male- 100 Female- 100 Paediatrics- 100	Author's fieldwork, 1996
	Baoan Gong [三星]保安宮	Baosheng Dadi	Male- 100 Female- 100 Paediatrics- 100 External Medicine- 100 Ophthalmology- 53	Sung Jin-shiu (1999)
	Tianyi Gong [臺中]天乙宮	Shennong Dadi	<i>Ditto</i>	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System II
	Puguang Si [頭屋]普光寺	Buddha	<i>Ditto</i>	Qiu Nian-yong (1993) Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System II
	Yuqing Gong [苗栗]玉清宮	Guansheng Dijun	<i>Ditto</i>	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System II
	Wugu Gong [竹南]五穀宮	Shennong Dadi	<i>Ditto</i>	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System II
	Xieyun Gong [獅潭]協雲宮	Guansheng Dijun	Male- 80	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System II
Lineage III <i>fanglun</i> pattern	Baoan Gong [臺南]保安宮	Baosheng Dadi	Male- 100 Paediatrics-100 Female miscellaneous illnesses- 50 Pregnancy & prenatal care- 50 Postpartum recuperation- 10	Qiu Nian-yong (1993)
Lineage IV <i>fanglun</i> pattern	Zhinan Gong [木柵]指南宮	Fuyou Dijin	Male- 80 Female- 80	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System VII Author's fieldwork, 1997
	Shengnan Gong [清水]聖南宮	Fuyou Dijin	Male- 80 Female- 80	Author's fieldwork, 1997
Lineage V	Tiannong Miao [礁溪]天農廟	Shennong Dadi	No distinct departments - 100	Sung Jin-shiu (1999)
Lineage VI	Yuanbao Gong [臺中]元保宮	Baosheng Dadi	No distinct departments - 127	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System III Author's fieldwork, 1997
Lineage VII	Renren Si [臺中]仁仁寺	Buddha	Male- 60 Female- 60	Author's fieldwork, 1997
Lineage VIII	Yundong Gong [頭屋]雲洞宮	Guansheng Dijun	Adult- 100 Paediatrics- 60	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System IV
Lineage IX	Jishi Gong [頭屋]濟世宮	Guansheng Dijun	No distinct departments - 160	Chang Yong-xun et al. (1999) - System V

Table 2 - List of Temples and *Yaoqian* Adopted

Temple	Location / Region	Key Deity	<i>Yaoqian</i> Adopted
Xingji Gong	Tainan City, ST	Baosheng Dadi	<i>Dadaogong qian</i>
Zhenan Gong	Sanxing, Yilan County, ET	Baosheng Dadi	<i>Dadaogong qian/ Mazu qian</i>
Baoan Gong	Dalongdong, Taipei City, NT	Baosheng Dadi	<i>Dadaogong qian</i>
Wai Mazu Miao	Hsinchu City, NT	Mazu	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Zhenlan Gong	Dajia, Taichung County, CT	Mazu	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Fuxing Gong	Waipu, Taichung County, CT	Shennong Dadi	<i>Lüzü qian & Mazu qian</i>
Shengxian Gong	Wufeng, Taichung County, CT	Shennong Dadi	<i>Mazu qian/Yandi qian</i>
Chaoqing Gong	Caotun, Nantou County, CT	Mazu	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Tianhou Gong	Lukang, Zhanghua County, CT	Mazu	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Qingan Gong	Zhanghua City, CT	Baosheng Dadi	<i>Dadaogong qian/ Mazu qian</i>
Nanyao Gong	Zhanghua City, CT	Mazu	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Chaotian Gong	Beigang, Yunlin County, CT	Mazu	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Daitian Fu	Beimen, Tainan County, ST	Wufu Wangye	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Ciji Gong	Xuejia, Tainan County, ST	Baosheng Dadi	<i>Dadaogong qian</i>
Huiji Gong	Xuejia, Tainan County, ST	Baosheng Dadi	<i>Dadaogong qian</i>
Taizi Gong	Xinying, Tainan County, ST	Zhongtan Yuanshuai	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Donglond Gong	Donggang, Pingdong County, ST	Mazu	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Wenheng Dian	Chaozhou, Pingdong County, ST	Guansheng Dijun	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Wugu Miao	Yilan City, ET	Shennong Dadi	<i>Lüzü qian</i>
Baoan Gong	Sanxing, Yilan County, ET	Baosheng Dadi	<i>Dadaogong qian & Lüzü qian</i>
Tianyi Gong	Taichung City, CT	Shennong Dadi	<i>Lüzü qian</i>
Puguang Si	Touwu, Miaoli County, CT	Buddha	<i>Lüzü qian</i>
Yuqing Gong	Miaoli City, CT	Guansheng Dijun	<i>Lüzü qian</i>
Wugu Gong	Zhunán, Miaoli County, CT	Shennong Dadi	<i>Lüzü qian</i>
Xieyun Gong	Shitan, Miaoli County, CT	Guansheng Dijun	<i>Lüzü qian</i>
Baoan Gong	?, Tainan County, ST	Baosheng Dadi	<i>Dadaogong qian/ Lüzü qian</i>
Zhinan Gong	Muzha, Taipei City, NT	Fuyou Dijin	<i>Lüzü qian/ Dadaogong qian</i>
Shengnan Gong	Qingshui, Taichung County, CT	Fuyou Dijin	<i>Lüzü qian/ Dadaogong qian</i>
Tiannong Miao	Jiaoxi, Yilan County, ET	Shennong Dadi	<i>Yandi qian</i>
Yuanbao Gong	Taichung City, CT	Baosheng Dadi	<i>Dadaogong qian</i>
Renren Shi	?, Taichung County, CT	Buddha	<i>Mazu qian</i>
Yundong Gong	Touwu, Miaoli County, CT	Guansheng Dijun	<i>Dijun qian</i>
Jishi Gong	Touwu, Miaoli County, CT	Guansheng Dijun	<i>Dijun qian</i>
Nanxing Gong	Yilan City, ET	Zhusheng Niangniang	<i>Fozu qian</i>

Abbreviations: NT= North Taiwan, CT= Central Taiwan, ST= South Taiwan, ET= East Taiwan.

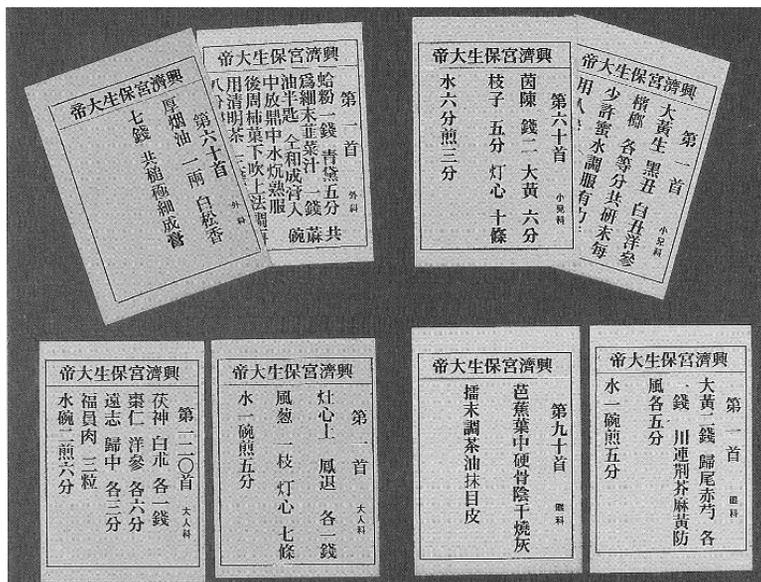


Figure 1: The complete collection of prescription divinations from Xingji Gong of Tainan (Lineage I)

Source: Caituanfaren Tainan shi Daguan Yin Ting Xingji Gong, ed., 2006, p. 93.

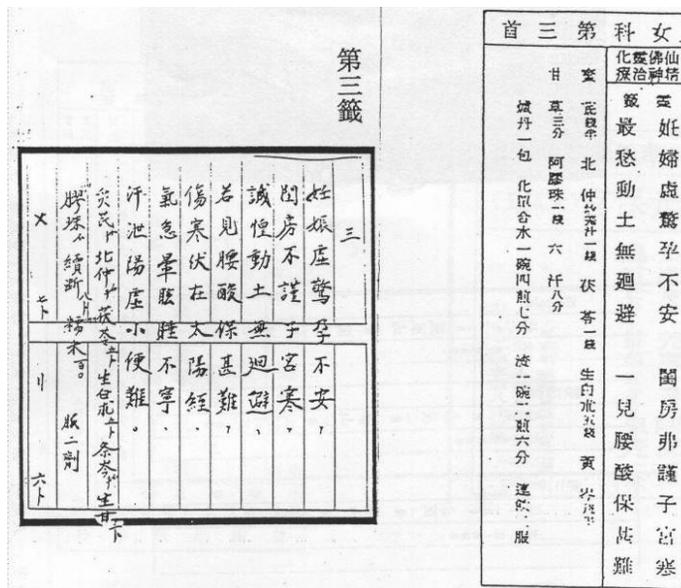


Figure 2: Prescription divinations from Baoan Gong of Tainan (Lineage III) (the left) and Zhinan Gong of Muzha (Lineage IV) (the right)

Source: Nian-yong Qiu, 1993, p. 330; author's fieldwork in Zhinan Gong, 1997. See also Jin-shiu Sung, 2011, p. 87.

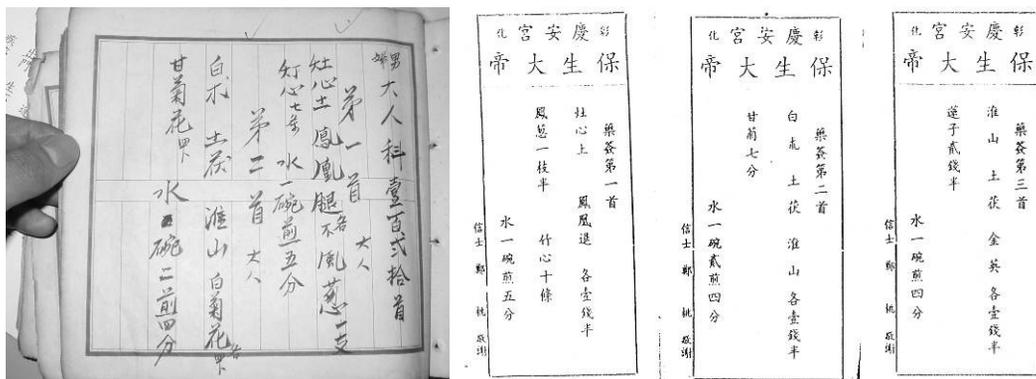


Figure 5: Prescription divinations from Fuxing Gong of Waipu (the left) and Qingan Gong of Zhanghua (the right)

Source: Author's fieldwork in Fuxing Gong, April 2003; those of Qingan Gong were cordially provided by Ms Yang Ling.

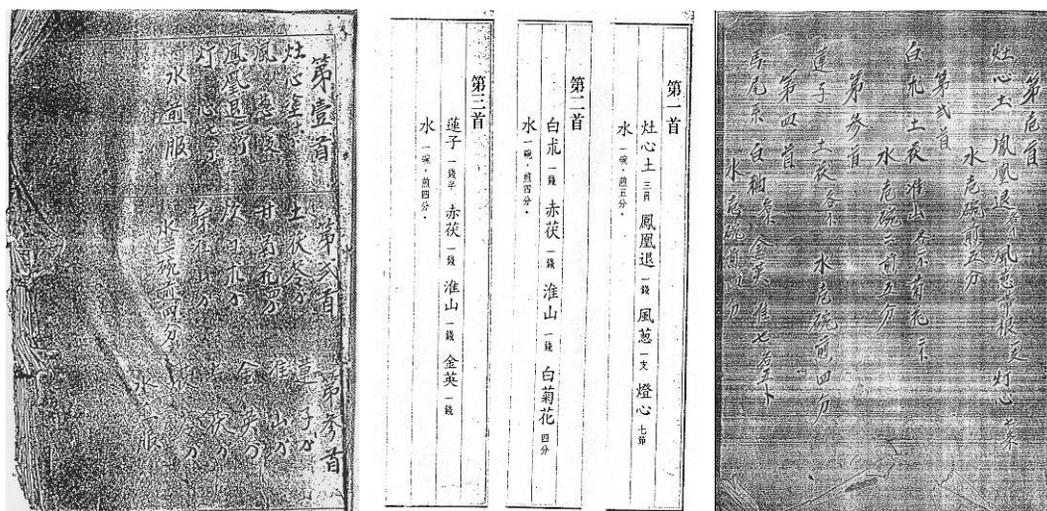


Figure 6: Prescription Divinations from Tianhou Gong of Lukang (the left), Baoan Gong of Dalongdong (the middle) and Zhenan Gong of Sanxing (the right)

Source: Those of Tianhou Gong were cordially provided by Dr. Xu Xue-ji; author's fieldwork in Baoan Gong and Zhenan Gong, 2003 and 1997 & 2011, respectively.

References

Bourdieu, Pierre. Translated by Richard Nice

1977 *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cai, Ming-xiong 蔡銘雄

2009 “*Xiaoshizhong de minsu yiliao: Yaoqian zai Taiwan minjian shehui fazhan chutan* 〈消失中的民俗醫療：「藥籤」在臺灣民間社會發展初探〉 [The Impending Fate of Divinatory Prescription: A Preliminary Report of a Healing Ritual in Taiwan Folk Beliefs].” Master thesis. Taichung: Tunghai University.

Caituanfaren Tainan shi Daguanyin Ting Xingji Gong 財團法人臺南市大觀音亭興濟宮(ed.)

2006(2002) *Tainan shi Daguanyin Ting and Xingji Gong* 《臺南市大觀音亭興濟宮》 [An Introduction to Daguanyin Temple and Xingji Temple, Tainan City]. Tainan.

Cai, Xin-ru 蔡欣茹

1999 “Huang Cai-long, You Jin-sheng xiansheng fangtanlu: Weiqian Baoangong Baosheng Dadi yiliao yishi 〈黃財龍、游金生先生訪談錄：尾塹保安宮保生大帝醫療軼事〉 [Records of Interview with Mr. Huang Cai-long and Mr. You Jin-sheng: Medical Anecdotes about ‘the Great Sovereign Who Protects Life’ of Baoan Temple in Weiqian Village].” *Yilan wenxian* 《宜蘭文獻》 [The Yilan Journal of History] 37: 90-99.

Chang, Hsun 張珣

1994(1989) *Jibing yu wenhua* 《疾病與文化》 [Illness and Culture]. Taipei: Daoxiang Publishing Ins.

1996 “Minsu yiliao yu wenhua zhenghouqun 〈民俗醫療與文化症候群〉 [Folk Medicine and Cultural Syndrome].” *Lishi yuekan* 《歷史月刊》 [Historical Monthly] 96: 50-54.

Chang, Yong-xun 張永勳 (et al.)

1999 *Taiwan diqu shimiao yaoqian xiankuang zhi diaocha yanjiu* 《臺灣地區寺廟藥籤現況之調查研究》 [Investigation of Medical Divinatory Lots Currently Used by Temples in Taiwan Area]. Research Reported by Institute of Chinese Pharmaceutical Sciences, Chinese Medical College. Taipei: Committee on Chinese Medicine and Pharmacy, Department of Health, Executive Yuan.

Chang, Yu-chun 張育銓

1996 “Shenmingdan de yiyao renleixue fenxi: Yi Hsinchu shi weili 〈神明單的醫療人類學分析：以新竹市為例〉 [A Perspective of Medical Anthropology on Shenmingdan: A Case Study of Hsinchu].” Master thesis. Hsinchu: National Tsing Hua University.

Chen, Ding-lin 陳丁林

2008 *Baosheng aimin: Fucheng Dingdadao sidian Xingji Gong dinghai nian qingcheng rangzai xieen jian qizhao qingjiao* 《保生愛民：府城頂大道祀典興濟宮丁亥年慶成禳災謝恩祈安七朝清醮》 [Protecting Life: The Seven-Day Thanksgiving Ceremony Held by Xingji Temple of Dingdadao, Tainan City in 2007]. Tainan: Caituanfaren Tainan shi Daguanyin Ting Xingji Gong.

Chen, Tai-sheng 陳泰昇 and Zheng-heng Chen 陳政恆 (et al.)

2002 “Taiwan yaoqian de chengqian shijian ji qi yingxiang yinsu 〈臺灣藥籤的成籤時間及其影響因

素〉 [Factors Influencing the Creation of Prescription Divination in Taiwan].” Paper presented at the Conference “*Medicine and Culture*.” Taipei: Institute of Ethnology and Preparatory Office, Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, October 24-25.

Chen, Tai-sheng 陳泰昇

2003 “Taiwan yaoqian diaocha yu yanjiu 〈臺灣藥籤調查與研究〉 [Field Survey and Studies on the Temple Pharmaceutical Lots].” Master thesis, Taichung: China Medical College.

Chen, Wen-ning 陳文寧

2000 “Shimiao minsu liaofa zhi tanjiu: Yi qiuyaoqian de zuguan jingyan weili 〈寺廟民俗療法之探究：以求藥籤的主觀經驗為例〉 [A Study of the Temple’s Folk Medicine: The Subjective Experience of Wishing for Pharmaceutical Lots].” Master thesis., Taipei: Taipei Medical University.

Daocheng Jushi 道成居士 (ed.)

1988 *Quansheng simiao lingqian zhujie* 《全省寺院靈籤註解》 [Annotations for Efficacious Divinations of Temples in Taiwan], 6 volumes. Tainan: Zhenghai Publishing House.

Evans-Prichard, E. E.

1976 *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gao, Ming-de 高銘德

2005 *Zhongguo qianshijie daquan* 《中國籤詩解大全》 [Complete Collection of Annotations for the Divination Oracles of China and Taiwan]. Tainan: Hualin Press.

Hanyu dazidian bianji weiyuanhui 漢語大字典編輯委員會 (eds.)

1988 *Hanyu dazidian* 《漢語大字典》 [Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Chinese Language]. Wuhan City: Hubei cishu chubanshe and Sichuan cishu chubanshe.

Jiang, Xiao-mei 江肖梅.

1943 “〈神籤〉 [The Efficacious Divinations].” *Minsu Taiwan* 《民俗臺灣》 3(1): 16-17.

Katz, Paul 康豹

2011 “Spirit-writing and Hakka Migration in Taiwan: A Case Study of the Canzan Tang (參贊堂) in Puli (埔里), Nantou (南投) County.” In Tam Wai Lun, eds., *Zhongguo defang zongjiao yishi lunji* 《中國地方宗教儀式論集》 [Essays on Chinese Local Religious Rituals], pp.469-514. Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, Chung Chi College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Lai, Zi-yi 賴子儀

2007 “Cong zaidi zhishi chufa: Yiliao anquan yu fengxian de linglei shijiao - Yi yaoqian weili 〈從在地知識出發：醫療安全與風險的另類視角—以藥籤為例〉 [The Alternative Perspective of Medical Security and Risk in Terms of Local Knowledge: A Study on Pharmaceutical Lots].” Paper presented at the TNVA 2007 Symposium “*Culture Resources: Visions of Local Culture*.” Taipei: Taipei National University of the Arts, December 6-8.

Lin, Guo-ping 林國平

1999 “Fujian chuantong shehui de minsu liaofa yu simiao yaoqian 〈福建傳統社會的民俗療法和寺廟藥籤〉 [Local Medicine and Prescription Divinations in the Traditional Society of Fukien].” *Yilan*

- wenxian 《宜蘭文獻》 [The Yilan Journal of History] (Special Issue on Prescription Divinations and Local Medicine) 37: 47-89.
- Lin, Mei-rong 林美容 and Li Jun-xiong 李俊雄
- 1991 “Zhanghua Nanyaogong de yaoqian 〈彰化南瑤宮的藥籤〉 [Prescription Divinations from Nanyao Gong, Zhanghua City].” *Minzuxue yanjiusuo ziliao huibian* 《民族學研究所資料彙編》 [Field Materials, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica] 5: 39-65.
- Lindenbaum, Shirley and Margaret Lock (eds.)
- 1993 *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lock, Margaret
- 1993a “The Politics of Mid-Life and Menopause: Ideologies for the Second Sex in North America and Japan.” In Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock eds., *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*, pp.330-363. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 1993b *Encounters with Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lu, Zhao-lin 魯兆麟
- 1998 *Dalongdong Baoangong Baosheng Dadi yaoqian jei* 《大龍峒保安宮保生大帝藥籤解》 [Interpretations of the Prescription Divinations from Baosheng Dadi in Dalongdong Area]. Taipei: Caituanfaren Taipei Baoangong.
- Martin, Emily
- 1991 “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-female Roles.” *Signs* 16(3): 485-501.
- Moerman, Daniel E.
- 2002 *Meaning, Medicine, and the ‘Placebo’ Effect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Qiu, Nian-yong 邱年永
- 1993 *Taiwan simiao yaoqian kaoshi* 《臺灣寺廟藥籤考釋》 [The Exegesis of yaoqian from Taiwanese Temples]. Tainanxian Xuejia Cijigong: Quanguo Baosheng Dadi miaoyu lianyihui.
- Sankangcun Fuxinggong 三坎村福興宮 (ed.)
- n.d. *Fuxinggong Wuguwang qian* 《福興宮五穀王籤》 [Prescription Divinations from Wugu Wang, Fuxing Gong, Sankang Village]. Handwritten copy.
- Shi, Zhen-min 施振民 (coll.)
- 1977 *Beigang Chaotiangong shengqian fu shengqianjie yaoqian sanzong* 《北港朝天宮聖籤·附聖籤解·藥籤三種》 [Sacred Divinations from Chaotian Gong, Beigang: With Interpretations and Other Prescription Divinations Attached]. Beigang, Yunlin County: Beigang Chaotiangong.
- Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart
- 1999 *Curing and Healing: Medical Anthropology in Global Perspective*. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press.

Sung, Jin-shiu Jessie 宋錦秀

- 1998 “Taiwan de ‘yiyashen’ xinyang 〈臺灣的「醫藥神」信仰〉 [Belief in Medical Gods in Rural Taiwanese Society].” *Wenhua shichuang* 《文化視窗》 [Windows of Culture] (Special Issue on Folk Religion in Taiwan) 5: 44-52.
- 1999 “Taiwan simiao yaoqian huibian: Yilan ‘yiyashen’ de xitong 〈臺灣寺廟藥籤彙編：宜蘭「醫藥神」的系統〉 [Collections of Prescription Divinations from Temples: The System of Medical Gods in Yilan County].” *Yilan wenxian* 《宜蘭文獻》 [The Yilan Journal of History] (Special Issue on Prescription Divinations and Local Medicines) 37: 3-46.
- 2003 “Taiwan simiao yaoqian zhi xitong leixing yu jibing wenhua: Yi Lüdi xianfang wenben wei zhongxin 〈臺灣寺廟藥籤之系統類型與疾病文化：以《呂帝仙方》文本為中心〉 [Lineages of Taiwanese Prescription Divinations and the Culture of Illness: With a Focus on Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi].” Paper presented at the Conference “*Divination and Healing*.” Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, August 29.
- 2007 “Temperament, Morality, and Disorders: Illnesses in Han Taiwanese Practice of *Yaoqian*.” Paper presented at “*The 17th New Zealand Asian Studies Society International Conference*.” New Zealand: NZASIA and The University of Otago, November 22-25.
- 2011 “Simiao yaoqian liaoyu wenhua yu jibing de jiangou 〈寺廟藥籤療癒文化與「疾病」的建構〉 [The Construction of Healing Power and Illness: A Study of Prescription Divination ‘*Yaoqian*’].” *Taiwan wenxian* 《臺灣文獻》 [Taiwan Wenxian: Report of Historico-Geographical Studies of Taiwan] (Special Issue on Popular Religion and Healing) 62(1): 55-96.

Taichung xian zhongyao tongye gonghui Dajia qu lianyihui 臺中縣中藥同業公會大甲區聯誼會 (ed.)

- 1981 *Dajia tianshang shengmu yaoqian* 《大甲天上聖母藥籤》 [Prescription Divinations from the Goddess of Heaven in Dajia Area]. Collected by Wang Yi-fu. Dajia, Taichung County: The Association of Dealers of Chinese Herbal Medicine.

Taiwan Nichi nichu Sinbō xia 臺灣日日新報社 (ed.)

- 1919 and 1924 Taiwan Nichi nichu Sinbō 《臺灣日日新報》 [The New Taiwan Daily News]. Taipei.

Winkelman, Michael and Philip M. Peek (eds.)

- 2004 *Divination and Healing: Potent Vision*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Xie, Cong-hui 謝聰輝 (et al.)

- 2003 “Taiwan yaoqian Lüdi xianfang de yuanyuan yu chuancheng chutan 〈臺灣藥籤《呂帝仙方》的淵源與傳承初探〉 [Preliminary Research on Origin and Transmission of Efficacious Prescription Divinations from Lüdi].” In Su San-leng, et al., eds., *Taiwan zhongyi koushu lishi zhuanji* 《臺灣中醫口述歷史專輯》 [Special Edition on Oral History of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Taiwan:], pp.209-221. Taipei: Traditional Chinese Medicine Association.

Yau, Chi-on 游子安

- 2011 “Boji xianfang: Qingmo yilai Lingnan diqu xianfang, shanshu yu Lüzu xinyang 〈博濟仙方：清末以來嶺南地區仙方、善書與呂祖信仰〉 [Divine Medical Prescriptions, Morality Books and the Master Lü Cult in South China since the Late Qing].” *Zhongguo keji shi zazhi* 《中國科技史雜誌》 [The Chinese Journal for the History of Science and Technology] 32(A1): 47-63.

Yilan xianzhengfu minzhengju 宜蘭縣政府民政局 (ed.)

- 1979 *Yilanxian simiao zhuanji* 《宜蘭縣寺廟專輯》 [Special Edition on Temples in Yilan County]. Yilan: Bureau of Civil Administration, Yilan County Government.

Yoshimoto, Shōji 吉元昭治

- 1990 *Taiwan simiao yaoqian yanjiu* 《臺灣寺廟藥籤研究》 [Research on Prescription Divinations from Taiwanese Temples]. Taipei: Wuling chubanshe.

Young, Allan

- 1982 “The Anthropologies of Illness and Sickness.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 1(11): 257-285.
1993 “A Description of How Ideology Shapes Knowledge of a Mental Disorder (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder).” In Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds., *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*, pp.108-128. Berkeley: University of California Press.

You, Qian 游謙 and Shi Fang-long 施芳瓏

- 2003 *Yilanxian minjianxinyang* 《宜蘭縣民間信仰》 [Popular Religion in Yilan County]. Yilan: Yilan County Government.

Zhulin yinshuju 竹林印書局 (ed.)

- 2002(1977) *Lüdi lingqian xianfang* 《呂帝靈籤仙方》 [Efficacious General Divination and Prescription Divination from Lüdi]. Hsinchu: Taiwan Zhulin Publishing House.

知識權威、實作慣習與歷史： 臺灣寺廟藥籤的選用與創發

宋錦秀

摘要

本文探討藥籤醫療知識的建構與被建構，旨在以臺灣寺廟藥籤的選用與創發為中心，檢視「占卜問疾」背後所涉及之知識權威、實作慣習與社會歷史過程等的相關議題；在此過程中，涉及諸多行動主體。研究資料，來自民族誌田野工作及田野調查所得之寺廟藥籤，並取其中最具代表性的《呂帝仙方》為分析範本。探討議題包含：在運作藥籤的脈絡中，醫療知識如何被傳載、轉化而為約定俗成的實作慣習？藥籤所賦有的療癒之力所從何來？而各類不同藥籤品目之間有否本質性差異，又差異為何？

筆者首先指出：藥籤療癒之力的有無，繫乎一套標準的求籤作業程序，其中，「擲筊」最為關鍵。它是一套可及性高，並且足供自我立下判準的「多重確認」機制；而「潔誠盡敬」，正是信眾自我檢證所求之方能否「盡應其效」的道德詮釋基礎。這些面相，體現了藥籤的實踐邏輯，同時也正是藥籤之「提示性」療效可能發揮之處。

再者，本文運用「世系群」(lineage) 的概念，提出一個有關藥籤系統所屬「類緣關係」的分類架構。筆者發現：臺灣寺廟藥籤的品目與神明來源之間，存在著相當程度的「異化」(alienation) 現象；藥籤資料的版本與類型，與個別該寺廟所祀的主神之間，並無絕對的關聯或必然的對應關係。或言，本質上，並無民間社會所謂的「大道公籤」、「五穀王籤」、「呂祖籤」或「媽祖籤」。這些藥籤，事實上大多在主祀醫藥神及媽祖的寺廟間，相互權宜流通、使用。

本文最後以藥籤版本學의 追蹤、比較，探討《呂帝仙方》這一特定權威版本在社會、歷史發展的進程中，如何被檢選、進而成為實作慣習的過程，從而更多檢視「求取藥籤」背後所潛藏之藥籤知識權威與實作慣習的關係，並藉此說明臺灣藥籤知識的流動性和歧異性。

透過「世系群」框架的分析，本文突顯臺灣各地寺廟選用藥籤版本的過程，其實是相當具有策略性的。本文肯定分香廟宇與其母廟，在藥籤採用版本上的歷

史關聯。然而，某些社會因素的影響，亦不可忽視：寺廟管理者、解籤者及相關中醫業者在藥籤知識生成與傳載的過程中，舉足輕重；藥籤印刷刊本的有無、流通的範圍，以及民間鸞堂的居中推促等等，亦是關鍵，從而建立或確認了某一特定藥籤做為典範版本的權威性。此中，具備文本能力、掌理鸞堂事務的男性執事、鸞生或地方仕紳，在成籤初期無疑扮演了重要的角色。這也顯示，臺灣寺廟藥籤所承載的醫學知識，其實是在某種特定脈絡及權力協議的遞變情境中，不斷被創發出來的。

關鍵詞：占卜問疾、藥籤、實作慣習、鸞堂、醫學知識