

## The Salvation of Religion? Public Charity and the New Religions of the Early Republic<sup>\*</sup>

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**Abstract:** Founded in 1921, Daoyuan combined a growing interest in spiritualism with the emerging civic Confucianism of the post-imperial era. In response to the lack of effective government services, Daoyuan formed the World Red Swastika charitable society the following year. The World Red Swastika Society, which enjoyed the political support of many well-connected individuals, soon began organizing relief activities on a large scale, but would eventually come into conflict with the newly founded Nanjing government. At the same time, elements within the group were moving in creasingly close to Japan, forming an ideological alliance with a new Japanese religion called the Teaching of the Great Source (Ōmotokyō), and eventually becoming a breakaway organization under the Japanese client state of Manchukuo. Like Nanjing, the government of Manchukuo remained wary of offering institutional support, and began laying the foundation for its own charitable sector under direct state control. Rather than new socio-

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\* This article owes its existence to the kindness of a number of people, in particular Guo Dasong of the Shandong Normal University, Robert Cribb and Li Narangoa of the ANU, and of course Misako Suzuki of Cornell University, all of whom have gone far out of their way to help me with this research. The paper was presented first at the “Popular Confucianism and Redemptive Societies International Conference” at Fo Guang University (Yilan, June 9–10, 2009), and again at the Second International Symposium on Secret Societies in Chinese History held at Shandong University (Jinan, August 16–19, 2009). I am deeply grateful to the organizers and participants of each of these events.

logical phenomena, this article views organizations such as the Daoyuan-Red Swastika Society as a response to a particular set of political and social conditions.

**Key words:** charities, new religions, Daoyuan, World Red Swastika Society, Manchukuo, civil society.

In 2000, the venerable scholar of Chinese sectarian religion, Li Shiyu 李世瑜, published a review of Lu Yao's 路遙 *Secret and Folk Religion in Shandong* (*Shandong minjian mimi jiaomen* 民間秘密教門). The review was generally positive, expressing praise for Lu Yao's decades of pathbreaking fieldwork on the religious origins of the Boxer (Yihetuan 義和團) movement. But Li did disagree with his colleague on one important point: why was the World Red Swastika Society (Shijie hong wanzi hui 世界紅卍字會), a religious charity that was founded and prospered in early twentieth century Shandong, not included in the book?<sup>1</sup> This mild dispute over terminology is not the first of its type, and hints deeper questions surrounding the transformation of religion during the early years of the Chinese Republic. Li Shiyu suggests the new lay movements of the twentieth century, such as the Red Swastika Society, were a continuation of the older tradition of banned religious teachings known collectively as the White Lotus. Many of the movement's early critics went a step further, characterizing the Red Swastika Society (as well as such contemporaries as the Goodness and Unity Society, Tongshanshe 同善社, and the Enlightened Goodness Society, Wushanshe 悟善社) as neither religion nor charity, but as a part of a longer tradition of religious-inspired underground organizations known broadly as "secret societies" (*mimi jieshe* 秘密結社).<sup>2</sup>

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1. Li Shiyu 李世瑜, "Minjian mimi zongjiao yanjiu zhi fangfalun zaiyi – jianping Lu Yao 'Shandong minjian jiaomen'" 民間秘密宗教研究之方法論再議——兼評路遙《山東民間教門》(Another opinion on the research methods of popular secret religions: a critical review of Lu Yao, *Popular Religions in Shandong*), *Shehui lishi xue wenji* 社會歷史學文集, pp. 44–45.
  2. Chao Wei-pang, "The Origin and Growth of the Fu Chi," *Folklore Studies* 1: 9–27. One reason is that many contemporaries of the Red Swastika Society, such as the Tongshanshe, were indeed secret, and reminded Western observers of organizations such as the Freemasons. See Paul de Witt Twinem, "Modern Syncretic Religious Societies in China. I," *Journal of Religion* 5.5: 463–82. Li Yingwu 李英武, "Dongbei luntan shiqi de minjian zongjiao yu mimi jieshe" 東北淪陷時期的民間宗教於秘密結社 (Folk religion and secret societies in the occupation-era Northeast), *Dongbeiyu luntan* 東北亞論壇 1:94. Xu Feng 徐峰, "Nanjing zhengfu zongjiao zhengce" 南京政府宗教政

In the introduction of this volume, David Palmer continues this same line of questioning, when he asks whether the wave of early twentieth century religious movements represents a continuation of a longer historical evolution, or whether these movements were sufficiently unique as to necessitate a new sociological category. As a historian, I strongly favor the former. The inability of previous scholars to definitively identify the Red Swastika Society (RSS) as a religion, charity, secret society or otherwise, does suggest that the categories themselves are not up to the task, but I would argue that referring to them by a new name does not necessarily add much to our understanding. Even if we do take sociological categories to heart, it is difficult to separate the groups themselves from very specific set of historical circumstances under which they arose and evolved. This article will outline the most important of these changes: the new wave of lay spiritualism, the revival of post-imperial Confucianism in a civic idiom, the rising tide of militarism and the shifting interpenetration of the state and public sphere. Other influences came from the outside. Foreign missionaries inspired Chinese charities to expand and deepen their activities, while the growing influence of Japan in Manchuria added a sense of urgency, and eventually a rival model of state sponsorship. The stresses and opportunities of these years were in many ways prophetic: much of what would come to characterize Chinese religious charities during the later twentieth century was forged in the very particular historical circumstances of the 1930s and 40s. Yet the continuity with previous eras, the influence of global institutional norms,

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策 (Policy of the Nanjing government towards religion), MA thesis, Department of Modern Chinese History, Shandong Normal University, p. 44. On the origin of the term “secret society” see Barend ter Haar, *Ritual and Mythology of the Chinese Triads: Creating an Identity*, pp. 36–37. The Japanese scholar Sakai Tadao (酒井忠夫) rejected the portrayal of these groups as “secret societies,” but stopped short of proposing an alternative. Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, “Minguo chuqi de xinxing zongjiao yundong yu xin shidai chaoliu” 民國初期的新興宗教運動於新時代潮流 (Contemporary trends and new religious movements in the early Republic), *Minjian zongjiao* 民間宗教 1:1–36.

and the continued evolution of Chinese religious charities in subsequent decades all caution against overstating the depth of the transformation.

## New Religions in a New Era

Although the early Republic is often characterized as a time of secularist iconoclasm, captured in the anti-religious themes of the May Fourth Movement, yet these same years also saw a burst of religious enthusiasm: the reformation of Buddhism, numerous Christian revivals, and an explosion of interest in what was generally called “spiritualism” (*lingxue* 靈學). Many reasons underly this trend, but the most immediate change after 1911 was political: in its provisional code, the new Republic promised freedoms of religion and association. This stance reversed (at least on paper) a policy dating back to the beginning of the Ming dynasty of criminalizing and persecuting the collection of lay religious teachings officially characterized as White Lotus teachings (Bailian jiao 白蓮教), or more simply, as heresy (*xiejiao* 邪教).<sup>3</sup> Despite their illegality, these teachings were deeply entrenched at all levels of Chinese society, and their number had proliferated over the course of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Of course, their new status did not erase centuries of hostility overnight. Soon after seizing power in 1912, Yuan

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3. Laws of the early Ming specifically banned the teachings of the White Lotus tradition, but the persecution of groups such as the Manicheans goes back far beyond that. Lin Wushu 林悟殊, “Moni jiao huaming bianxi” 摩尼教華名辨析 (Alternate names for Manichaeism in China), *Jiuzhou xuelin* 九州學林 15:190–243.

4. One important change of the nineteenth century was the relative disintegration of authority within teachings, allowing large numbers of new groups to splinter off with relative ease. The extreme of this phenomenon was the Yihetuan movement, which was effectively leaderless. See Lu Yao 路遙, “Exploring the History of the Yihetuan” in Ma Xisha 馬西沙 and Meng Huiying 孟惠英, eds, *Popular Religion and Shamanism*, tr. Chi Zhen and Thomas DuBois, vol. I of RSCC Religious Studies in Contemporary China Collection, pp. 255–92.

Shikai 袁世凱 initiated the military suppression of a variety of “old style” religious teachings (such as the Way of Yellow Heaven, Huangtian dao 黃天道, and the Golden Elixir Teaching, Jindan jiao 金丹教, among others) in the Northeast.<sup>5</sup> Those teachings that did prosper often relied less upon the strict application of law than the personal patronage of Beiyang elites. Often it was the application of official pressure that forced groups to react and organize more actively—such would be the case with the Buddhist revival of the 1930s. Nevertheless, the new regime provided a unique opportunity for this vibrant lay tradition to expand as never before.

In response, a variety of religious teachings began striving for public prominence. Existing teachings such as Zailijiao 在理教 had entered the Republic firmly established in major cities throughout China, and now began to organize on a more ambitious scale. From its base in Tianjin, Zailijiao began disseminating new scriptures, and year established a new national headquarters in Beijing.<sup>6</sup> The Way of Penetrating Unity (Yiguandao 一貫道), which had evolved out a number of smaller teachings during the late Qing, began a period of rapid expansion during the 1920s.<sup>7</sup> Numerous new teachings and organizations were founded throughout the country, and in rapid succession. Like the Yiguandao, many of these new groups were based on spirit writing (*fujī* 扶乩). Such was the origin of the Morality Teaching (Daodejiao 道德教), which was founded by spirit writing adherents in Guangdong, and of the Morality Study Society (Daode xue she 道德學社), which grew out of spirit writing associations in Sichuan.<sup>8</sup> The new teachings

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5. *Shengjing shibao* (Shenyang) 盛京時報, March 30, 1913; January 15, 1919.

Liang Jiagui 梁家貴, *Minguo Shandong jiaomen shi* 民國山東教門史 (History of Sectarians in Republican Shandong), pp. 25–26.

6. Thomas DuBois, *Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China*, pp. 112–21.

7. Lu Yao 路遙, *Shandong minjian mimi jiaomen* 山東民間祕密教門 (Secret popular religions in Shandong), pp. 370–91.

8. Bernard Formoso, *De Jiao: A Religious Movement in Contemporary China and Overseas: Purple Qi from the East*. Komukai Sakurako 小武海櫻子, “Seimatsu Shisen no rantō to shūkyō kessha—Kassen kai zentō jizen kai

immediately set about establishing a public presence. Duan Zhengyuan 段正元 formed the Morality Study Society in 1912, and just four years later was invited by senior military leaders to establish its national headquarters in Beijing. The Tongshanshe, also from Sichuan, was formed at roughly the same time, and registered as a national organization in 1917. Further north, Ma Shiwei 馬士偉 established the “Single Heart Hall” (Yixin tang 一心堂) in 1913 near Zouping 鄒平 in Shandong, and from there, began to spread his “Holy Teaching of the Single Heart Longhua Heavenly Way” 一心天道龍華聖教會.<sup>9</sup> Befitting their aspirations to respectability, many of these new teachings drew from among political and commercial elite, who saw in them a forum for moral and civic activism.<sup>10</sup>

Daoyuan 道院 was typical of these new lay movements, and would become one of the most successful. The origins of Daoyuan date to around 1916, when two officials in northeastern Shandong—magistrate Wu Fusen 吳福森 and Garrison Captain Liu Shaoji 劉紹基—began holding spirit writing sessions in the yamen of rural Bin County 濱縣. Joined by a couple dozen local notables and mid-grade functionaries, Wu and Liu met in what they termed the called the Hall of the Great Immortal (Da xian ci 大仙祠) to ask a variety of Buddhas, immortals and sages for sacred counsel (*tan xun* 壇訓, literally the “counsel of the altar”) through the medium of the planchette.<sup>11</sup> Among the

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zenshi” 清末四川の鸞堂と宗教結社——合川会善堂慈善会前史 (Religious groups and late Qing phoenix halls—the early history of the Hechuan hui charitable society), *Tōhō shūkyō* 東方宗教 5:50–71.

9. Shao Yong 邵雍, *Zhongguo huidaomen* 中國會道門 (Chinese sectarians), pp. 167–80, 197–98. Shiga Ichiko 志賀市子, *Chūgoku no kokkuri san-furan shinkō to kajin shakai* 中国のこつくりさん扶鸞信仰と華人社会 (Chinese table turners—spirit writing beliefs and Chinese society), pp. 163–75.

10. The magazine *Philosophy* (*Zhebao*) published by the Ji’nan Daoyuan contains numerous notices for local morality and Buddhist study societies.

11. This telling of the history of Daoyuan, along with stylized division into periods (birth, growth, etc.) is repeated almost verbatim in a number of different sources, including Yuancheng 圓誠, *Daoci gangyao dadao pian* 道慈綱要大道篇 (A general overview of dao and charity); Uchida Ryōhei

many deities that this group consulted, the most important was a unique figure called the Grand Immortal or Grand Perfected (Shang xian 尙仙, Shang zhen ren 尙真人). Over time, this deity revealed more of his identity, including some of the names by which he would later be known: the Ancestor of Former Heaven (Xiantian laozu 先天老祖), and more commonly, the Great Progenitor (Laozu 老祖). The Great Progenitor presided over the Five Teachers (Confucius, Laozi, the Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad), as well as a host of lesser deities. This “five-in-one” theology would form the basis of Daoyuan religious life, and its multitude of deities would allow numerous voices to express themselves directly to believers.

By the early 1920s, the loose association of spirit-writing adherents in Bin had coalesced into a distinct teaching. In 1921, a group of 48 disciples, led by 68 year-old Jiangsu native Du Bingyin (杜秉寅), relocated to permanent premises in the provincial capital of Ji’nan, where on February 9<sup>th</sup> they established the first Daoyuan.<sup>12</sup> Soon after its founding, the new Daoyuan began receiving writings of a more substantial nature: installments of a scripture. Over the next three months, the Great Progenitor, now known by his more complete title of the Original Singular Three Primordial Progenitor of the Dark and

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内田良平, *Manmō no dokuritsu to sekai kōmanjikai no undō* 滿蒙の独立と世界紅卍字会の運動 (Activities of the World Red Swastika Societies and the Independence of Manchuria and Mongolia) ; and Kōa shūkyō kyōkai 興亞宗教協會, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai* 世界紅卍字会道院の實態 (The state of the Daoyuan-World Red Swastika Society). Li Guangwei 李光偉, “Daoyuan, Daodeshe, Shijie hongwanzi hui—xinxing zongjiao cishan zuzhi de lishi kaocha (1916–1954) 道院・道德社・世界紅卍字會——新興宗教慈善組織的歷史考察 (Daoyuan, the Morality Society, and the World Red Swastika Society—historical investigation into new popular religions and charitable organizations (1916–1954)),” MA thesis, Shandong Normal University, p. 49 gives these two individuals by their Dao names Wu Fuyong 吳福永 and Liu Fuyuan, 劉福緣 respectively, but is otherwise consistent about their details. Although the term *da xian* often refers to animal spirits, here it signifies the teaching’s Great Progenitor.

12. Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai*, pp. 15–16.



Mysterious Palace (Qingxuan gong yixuan zhenzong sanyuan shiji taiyi laozu 青玄宮——玄真宗三元始紀太乙老祖, or simply the Singular Progenitor, Taiyi laozu 太乙老祖, for short) revealed a text known as the *Scripture of the Polar Singularity* (*Taiyi beiji zhenjing* 太乙北極真經). The text itself is of rather esoteric interest. Most of its twelve short sections (*juan* 卷) are taken up in matters of metaphysical speculation, such as the formation of the universe from primordial *qi* (written with the characteristic character 炁), the division of time, the creation of the *taiji* 太極, and Former and Latter Heaven. Each section follows roughly the same pattern, contrasting how important concepts are generally understood (*yanyi zhi* 言意旨) with their true meaning (*zhen quan* 真詮).<sup>13</sup>

Yet even if its specific content was likely to have been of limited interest to most believers, the revelation of the *Scripture of the Polar Singularity* marked the transformation of Daoyuan from a collection of like-minded devotees into a concrete religious movement. With a permanent center and its revealed scripture, the newly formed Daoyuan began to spread through north China. Late in 1921 it registered with the Beiyang government, and within just over a year, well-traveled leaders from the “mother” Daoyuan (*mutan* 母壇,) in Ji’nan had founded three new branches in Tianjin, Beijing and Jining. As its base expanded to include members of the commercial classes (merchants would eventually comprise 63% of the Ji’nan Daoyuan), the growing core of members had no trouble coming up with funds for ambitious mission activity locally, as well as to more distant cities to the south. Daoyuan continued to multiply throughout the 1920s, and by the end of the decade appeared in nearly every province in China. The movement remained centered in the North: Ji’nan would remain its spiritual heart, joined by an administrative center (*zong yuan* 總院) in Beijing. Through the decade, the largest number of Daoyuan were in Shandong and the immediately adjacent provinces of Zhili, Jiangsu, and

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13. *Taiyi beiji zhenjing* 太乙北極真經. Earlier copies are held by libraries at Harvard and UC Berkeley, but I have not had a chance to compare the various versions.

Anhui.<sup>14</sup>

The quickly growing network was only loosely structured. Individual Daoyuan were largely autonomous, and ritual life largely a matter of personal preference. The basic ritual calendar was based on the Five Religions, combining the major occasions of the three religions with the observance of Christmas, as well as an unnamed holiday to represent Islam.<sup>15</sup> The inside of each Daoyuan housed a variety of deities, signified by decorous spirit tables in place of statues. A special effort was made to establish visual and ritual parity among the founders of the five religions: ritual protocol for most occasions called for an identical offering at each of the five tablets, with the obvious exceptions of offering meat to the Buddha, or pork to Muhammad. Special consideration was made for the Five Teachers' birthdays, each of which was marked by the recitation of an appropriate scripture.<sup>16</sup> However, this ritual regimen was less doctrine as a platform upon which each Daoyuan, as well as individual believers were free to expand. Some of the largest Daoyuan may have maintained the rigorous ritual calendar later recorded by Japanese investigators in places like Beijing, but most probably resembled the 30-member Daoyuan in Pan-

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14. Yuancheng, *Daoci gangyao dadao pian*, p. 67; Li Guangwei 李光偉, "Minguo Shandong Daoyuan ji Shijie hongwanzihui shishi gouchen" 民國山東道院暨世界紅字會史事鉤沉 (Raising up the history of Daoyuan and the World Red Swastika Society in Republican Shandong), *Shandong jiaoyu xueyuan bao* 山東教育學院報 125.1:52; Guo Dasong 郭大松, "Ji'nan Daoyuan ji Hongwanzihui zhi diaocha' bianzheng" 《濟南道院及紅卍字會之調查》辯證 (Analysis of the "Investigation of the Ji'nan Daoyuan and Red Swastika Society"), *Qingdao daxue shifan xueyuan xuebao* 青島大學師範學院學報 22.3: 31.

15. Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai*, p. 119 places the date of this unnamed Muslim observance on the sixth day of the fifth lunar month. This date may once have corresponded to one celebrated by Chinese or other Muslims, but the Muslim calendar being strictly lunar (i.e., it does not correspond to annual events such as solstices), it is impossible to guess what this occasion might have been.

16. Uchida Ryōhei, *Manmō no dokuritsu to sekai kōmanjikai no undō*, p. 127.

shi 磐石, Jilin, which simply made daily offerings of incense and candles for each of their deities.<sup>17</sup> The teaching made few demands on ordinary members—the only specific mention of practice in *Polar Singularity* is advice for how and when to mediate. Quite the opposite, its inclusive nature allowed individual members to pursue their personal beliefs, practices and needs through Daoyuan.<sup>18</sup>

The one ritual activity that nearly all Daoyuan did engage in was spirit writing. Even after the revelation of *Polar Singularity*, each individual Daoyuan continued to produce their own writings, with content ranging from general statements of philosophy and doctrine to very specific advice. The Great Progenitor remained the most consistent voice, but he was joined by the Five Teachers, Huineng 慧能, Su Dongpo 蘇東坡, Yue Fei 岳飛, Guandi 關帝 and the Virgin Mary, among many others. Deities spoke about topics that interested them: Laozi would most likely discourse on the Dao, Confucius on filial piety, and

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17. Japanese sources report that larger Daoyuan kept a busy schedule of Greater and Ordinary Celebrations (Daqing 大慶, Changqing 常慶), Standard and Ordinary Rituals (*dianyi* 典儀, *changyi* 常儀), as well as Daoyuan variations of personal rituals, such as weddings and funerals. (Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai, pp. 111–22, 137) Yuancheng, *Daoci gangyao dadao pian*, pp. 82–85; Jia Zhanyi 賈佔一 and Jin Lianshan 金連山, “Panshi xian Daode hui, Wanzi hui” 磐石縣道德會卍子會 (The Morality Society and Swastika Societies in Panshi County), in *Wei Man shebui* 偽滿社會 (Society in the Pretender Manchukuo), edited by Sun Bang 孫邦 et al., pp. 579–81.

18. In this sense, Daoyuan was typical of its contemporaries, most of which included some form of healing. Wang Zhixin 王治心, *Zhongguo zongjiao sixiang shi dagang* 中國宗教思想史大綱 (Synopsis of the history of religious thought in China), pp. 215–21. In a short 1921 essay, Chen Duxiu ridiculed the Common Goodness Society precisely for the faith its members placed in healing practices he rather imprecisely terms shamanism. Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, “Da He Qiansheng” 答何謙生 (A Reply to He Qiansheng), *Minguo congshu* 民國叢書 1.92: 282–89. On the attraction of healing in the early Yiguandao, see Thomas DuBois, *Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China*, pp. 146–47.

Jesus on universal love, as well as the particular place of Christians in China.<sup>19</sup> They also revealed individual personalities. When worshippers in Ji'nan asked one deity about his background, he revealed wounded pride at not having been recognized more quickly: "Ha ha! You ask about my history? I lived in ancient times, and like the Old Man of the Southern Seas, I studied with the Heavenly Matron. Then I spent 2,600 years refining myself in Kongdong Mountain 崆峒山. Your so-called 'Eight Immortals,' they're all my disciples!"<sup>20</sup> Spirit writing also gave specific guidance, such as the instruction to move from Bin to Ji'nan. Over the next two decades, individual Daoyuan would make many of its most important strategic decisions based on instructions delivered through this same medium. However, because there was no real attempt to coordinate or rectify locally produced revelations against each other, the practice of spirit writing did little to draw the teaching together, and had the potential to do just the opposite.<sup>21</sup>

Early publications reveal the intellectual diversity of the movement. Many branches produced their own newspapers, including Morality Magazine (*Daode zazhi* 道德雜誌), Morality Monthly (*Daode yuekan* 道德月刊), and *Swastika Daily News* (*wan zi ri ri xinwen* 卍字日日新聞), among others, that explored topics in theology and social philosophy. Like the religious thought of the Daoyuan, these publications are highly syncretic. The magazine *Philosophy* (*Zhe bao* 哲報) illustrates the breadth of beliefs and ideas that found their way into the group's intellectual cauldron.<sup>22</sup> Beginning with the cover, which combined titles in Chinese, English and Arabic, each issue began with a standard statement declaring the publication open to any discussion of religion, philosophy, spiritualism (*ling xue* 靈學), morality, charity, or

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19. A large number of these writings are reproduced in Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai*, pp. 5–10, 61–80; and Yuancheng, *Daoci gangyao dadao pian*, pp. 48–60.

20. Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai*, p. 4.

21. This could be compared to the centripetal effect of direct possession in the Yihetuan, or of spirit writing on the Yiguandao.

22. I am extremely grateful to Professor Guo Dasong for sharing with me his copies of this rare publication. Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huidaomen*, p. 183.

items of a similar nature. Articles cover a wide variety of topics: the nature of forgiveness in the Christian New Testament, a comparison among Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist approaches to meditation, and pronunciation guides for reciting Buddhist sutras, as well as expositions on metaphysics, Confucian morality lectures, Buddhist sermons, and biographies of famous monks. Although there are occasionally items of specific Daoyuan interest, such as excerpts of spirit written texts, the thrust of *Philosophy* is less synthesis than breadth. As viewed in its own publications, Daoyuan was not a single intellectual agenda, as much as an umbrella for a wide variety of ideas and individuals.

Thus, although we may classify Daoyuan as a “new religion,” it was not especially innovative. Most of its ideas and practices were already prevalent throughout China. Its formulation of Five Religions under the Singular Progenitor was just one of many variations on the basic “three-in-one” or “five-in-one” formulation that sectarian teachings, and popular theology more generally had already embraced for centuries. Spirit writing, the practice that lay at the formation of the group, was commonplace in popular practice, and also featured prominently in many of its contemporaries.<sup>23</sup> And while publications like *Philosophy* did provide an arena for members to explore an eclectic mix of ideas, they never aspired to present anything like a coherent doctrine. It would not be too much of an exaggeration that during these earliest years, movements such as Daoyuan were primarily a reflection of opportunity. The deregulation of religion provided a legally and socially acceptable forum for new movements to expand, even as aspects of their theology and identity remained somewhat inchoate.

## Confucian Revival and the Turn to Charity

While the new Republic had opened the door for religious ex-

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23. Tian Hailin 田海林, “Wanguo daodehui de lishi kaocha” 萬國道德會的歷史考察 (Historical investigation of the International Ethical Society), MA thesis, Shandong Normal University, pp. 75–79. Shiga Ichiko, *Chūgoku no kokkuri san—furan shinkō to kajin shakai*, pp. 169–75.

pression, it also prompted a radical reassessment of Confucianism. Since the legal reforms of the early Ming dynasty at least, the ideas and institutions of Confucianism had become inextricably intertwined with the legitimacy of the imperial state.<sup>24</sup> The tie between the two was such that as the Qing fell into decline, it was even imagined that this central pillar of Chinese culture might be pulled down along with it. However, once the shock of political change had subsided, many intellectuals of the early Republic came to see things quite differently: the fall of the moribund imperial system had not condemned Confucius' teachings, it had liberated them. Seeing new opportunities on the horizon, a spectrum of elites bridging the old and new regimes now sought to revive Confucianism for a new age. Most of the new religious movements of the period would revolve in some way or another around the restoration or preservation of Confucian morality.<sup>25</sup>

The Confucian resurgence of the early twentieth century was not simply reaction—the death throes of an obsolete political class—it was a forward-looking vision of moral rebirth for China and the entire world. It created opportunities for displaced scholarly elites to reclaim the moral high ground, to join and even lead the forces of political change. Instead of retreating to tradition, they would make Confucian ethics the center of a new universal civilization that would transcend the boundaries of nations and of religious faiths.<sup>26</sup> Such ideas made their way into new religions such as Daoyuan, but also into variety of new-founded societies that were more strictly oriented towards ethics and morality. Among the earliest of these, the Confucian Society (Kongjiao hui 孔教會) was founded in August of 1913, just over one year after the fall of the dynastic system. The society did not envision

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24. Zhao Yifeng 趙軼峰, *Mingdai guojia zongjiao guanli zhidu yu zhengce yanjiu* 明代國家宗教管理制度與政策研究 (Research into the administrative system and regulation of religion during the Ming).

25. Tian Hailin, “Wanguo daodehui de lishi kaocha,” pp. 75–79; Liang Jiagui, *Minguo Shandong jiaomen shi*, pp. 26–27.

26. Prasenjit Duara emphasizes the international focus of these ethical movements. *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern*.

Confucianism replacing the world's religions, as much as transcending and uniting them. At the society's founding ceremony in the town of Qufu 曲阜, the child prodigy Jiang Xizhang 江希張 spoke eloquently of the "way of Confucius," calling Confucius' teaching "the very idea of world unification," and adding that "there is nothing that it does not penetrate, it accepts all teachings, and it has the power to accept the cultures of the world." (孔道爲大同主義，無所不貫，融納各教，有吸收全世界文化之力) When pressed further, he replied with a four-line poem:

Trains and steamship connect the five continents,  
 Heaven instructs me to visit them all.  
 Christianity, Islam, Daoism and Buddhism each opened a door,  
 But the rain of Lu and the wind of Zou sweep the globe.

鐵路輪船遍五洲，天教小子再周遊。  
 基回道佛同開化，魯雨鄒風滿地球。

Jiang's spontaneous poem was apparently not well received, but its ideas were indeed prescient: just as the speaker could now travel the four corners of the world, so too should Confucian teachings (Lu and Zou being the birthplaces of Confucius and Mencius, respectively) nourish and unite the world's religions. In its optimistic view of worldwide unity, the Confucian revival was by no means unique. The early twentieth century was charged with this sense of immanent global transformation: just a few years before, the American missionary John Mott had urged his fellow Christians to evangelize the entire world "in this generation."<sup>27</sup> The names of Chinese moral organizations from the time all reveal similarly grand aspirations: the Global Ethical Society (Huanqiu daodehui 環球道德會), World Religious Unification Society (Shijie zongjiao datonghui 世界宗教大同會), and Jiang's own International Ethical Society (Wanguo daodehui 萬國道德會).<sup>28</sup>

27. Timothy E. Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 7–31.

28. Tian Hailin, "Wanguo daodehui de lishi kaocha," pp. 8–28, 75. Nor were these simple dressing or convention. When asked to change their name

Beyond talk, a series of new opportunities propelled Confucian revival into an expanding public sphere. Distressed elites had been bewailing China's moral decline with increasing urgency since the mid-nineteenth century, and by the early twentieth century, the idiom of moral regeneration (literally the "moral rescue of the world" *daode jiushi* 道德救世) transcended ideological factions, and pervaded every corner of political discourse.<sup>29</sup> As the Republic opened up new avenues for private initiative, the emphasis shifted towards the need for citizens take action to alleviate ignorance and suffering within society. The result would be a vast expansion of social reform movements, moral societies, and private charities.

Charities were nothing new in China. Providing charitable relief had long been an expression of Confucian benevolence, and increasingly since the late Ming dynasty, local officials, gentry and merchants had taken it upon themselves to support "Halls of Benevolence" (*shantang* 善堂), to care for orphans and widows, distribute food, and provide decent burials for the indigent dead. As Fuma Susumu has discussed in detail, such initiatives bridged any notional gap between public and private: they supplemented the official relief structure, and often worked with government support, even as their activities and finances were closely monitored. The charitable realm began to expand during the late nineteenth century, as the rapid deterioration of public security following the Taiping Rebellion left the population increasingly vulnerable to a variety of crises. Even then, charity remained often a piecemeal effort. Concerned elites might band together to provide emergency relief during a local disaster, but such arrangements were often temporary. Even the more established *shantang* tended to operate individually, serving local needs, and often relying on the largesse

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to something more patriotic, the International Ethical Society refused, on the grounds that this idea was central to their philosophy.

29. Zhao Yancai 趙炎才, "Qingmo-Mincho daode jiushi sichao de lishi kaocha" 清末民初道德救世思潮的歷史考察 (Historical investigation of the tide of moral Salvationist thought in the late Qing and early Republic), *Zhejiang luntan* 浙江論壇 1:79–83.



of a single patron.<sup>30</sup> It was only during the 1870s that the charitable realm began a more substantive consolidation. The construction of telegraph lines out of Shanghai facilitated communication between scattered *shantang*, allowing them to coordinate their activities. All along the coast, and increasingly in the interior, Christian missionaries established schools, hospitals and orphanages, inspiring local *shantang* to conduct their own operations on a more ambitious scale. Often it took a moment of immediate crisis to transform good intentions into actual institutions: when bubonic plague struck the city of Guangzhou in 1894, “private charities mushroomed all over the city.”<sup>31</sup> But beyond the sad litany of familiar disasters—floods, droughts, famine and female infanticide—it was the decade of near constant war that prompted the formation of the first large-scale, international charities. Between 1894 and 1905, the Sino- and Russo-Japanese Wars, the Boxer suppression and Xinhai Revolution were fought in rapid succession on Chinese soil, at great price to the Chinese civilians and foreign missionaries caught in the crossfire. Inspired in part by the actions of the Japanese Red Cross, which first came to China in 1894 to treat wounded on both sides of the Sino-Japanese conflict, a coalition of Chinese

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30. Fuma Susumu 夫馬進, *Chūgoku zenkai zendōshi kenkyū* 中国善会善堂史研究 (Research on the history of Chinese benevolent societies), p. 644.

31. A great deal of historical scholarship has been written on elite-led charitable institutions and their evolving relationship with the Chinese state. On the late imperial period, see Fuma Susumu, *Chūgoku zenkai zendōshi kenkyū*: especially 493–96; Joanna F. Handlin Smith, “Benevolent Societies: The Reshaping of Charity During the Late Ming and Early Ch’ing,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 46.2: 309–37; Mary Backus Rankin, “Managed by the People: Officials, Gentry and the Foshan Charitable Granary, 1795–1845,” *Late Imperial China* 15.2: 1–52; and Angela Ki Che Leung, “To Chasten Society: The Development of Widow Homes in the Qing, 1773–1911,” *Late Imperial China* 14.2: 1–32. On the early twentieth century, see Vivienne Shue, “The Quality of Mercy: Confucian Charity and the Mixed Metaphors of Modernity in Tianjin,” *Modern China* 4:411–52 and Alfred H. Y. Lin, “Warlord, Social Welfare and Philanthropy: The Case of Guangzhou under Chen Jitang, 1929–1936,” *Modern China* 2:151–98. Quote from Lin: 161.

and foreign actors, with the active encouragement of the Qing court, laid the foundation for a Chinese branch of the organization, which was formally established as the Red Cross of China in 1904.<sup>32</sup>

Even more than the new religious movements, private charities were poised to expand during the Republican period. If anything, war and disaster increased in severity, just as the Great War in Europe began diverting vital foreign funds and personnel away from the mission institutions. As was the case with religion, the charitable sphere benefited from a period of initial deregulation (even though new regulations would be imposed later), and in the burgeoning world of print media and public opinion, charitable initiatives were more visible and their social capital greater than ever before.<sup>33</sup> I would argue that the

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32. The international credentials of the Red Cross were particularly important given the shifting and borderless nature of military conflict during these years. Zhou Qiuguang describes a particularly convoluted situation, the urgent need to evacuate foreign missionaries past the Japanese blockade of Yingkou during the Russo-Japanese War, as the moment that first prompted the use of the name of the Red Cross. Zhou Qiuguang 周秋光, "Wanqing shiqi de Zhongguo hongshizi hui shulun" 晚清時期的中國紅十字會述論 (On the Red Cross Society of China during the Late Qing), *Jindai shi yanjiu* 近代史研究 3:134–92; See also Jin Huanyu 靳環宇, *Wan Qing yizhen zuzhi yanjiu* 晚清義賑組織研究 (Charitable organizations during the late Qing), pp. 160–93; Zhou Qiuguang 周秋光, *Hongshizi hui zai Zhongguo 1904–1927* 紅十字會在中國 1904–1927 (The Red Cross Society in China, 1904–1927); Zhu Hu 朱滸, *Difang xin liudong jiqi chaoyue: wanqing yizheng yu jindai Zhonggou de xinchen daixie* 地方性流動及其超越：晚清義賑與近代中國的新陳代謝 (Local currents and their overflow: the metabolism of late Qing charities in modern China).

33. Li Guangwei 李光偉, "20 shiji shangbanye Zhongguo minjian cishan jiu-zhu shiye de dianfan—Shijie hongwanzi hui Yantai fenhui xuyang yuan de lishi kaozheng" 20 世紀上半葉中國民間慈善救助事業的典範——世界紅卍字會 煙台分會恤養院的歷史考證 (An example of civil charitable organizations in early twentieth century China—historical examination of the charitable homes of the Yantai branch of the World Red Swastika Society), *Ludong daxue xuebao* (zhexue shehui kexue ban) 魯東大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 24.3: 17–22. Gong Rufu 龔汝富, "Minguo shiqi ji

growth of the charitable sphere outpaced even that of religion, and moreover changed the direction that the new religions themselves would take. Although many of the traditional sectarian religions had devoted resources for public acts of benevolence, the new era changed charity from sideline to central focus. In this volume, Komukai Sakurako 小武海櫻子 shows the Tongshanshe undergoing precisely this transition, changing into what she refers to as a “religious-style charitable society” (宗教性的慈善會).<sup>34</sup>

The same process shaped Daoyuan, which over the 1920s was gradually eclipsed by the charitable work of the Red Swastika Society. From the outset, Daoyuan had set its sights on performing good works—the 1921 charter declared as the aims of the movement to “raise morality and practice charity.” Social activism fit easily into Daoyuan’s vision of world transformation. As much as it was in political discourse, the single idiom of “world salvation” (*jiu shi* 救世) was infinitely expansive. In a theological sense, it was raised as the single goal of the Five Religions, as in the following article from *Philosophy*:

“All religions that people believe in today are at their root all the same holy faith. The way at their core is to work to realize the task of world salvation. . . . People’s hearts are corrupt, how should we save them? The way of the world is in decline, how should we save it? The teaching of Confucius says to first correct men’s hearts. The teaching of Jesus says to spread universal love. The teachings of the Buddha and Laozi say to save yourself and to save all men, rescue them from pain and difficulty. The religion of the Muslims says to maintain purity.”<sup>35</sup> (今願信仰宗教者。同本神聖宗教。其中至正

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andu cishan tuanti lifa ji qi qishi” 民國時期監督慈善團體立法及其啓示 (Establishment of legal oversight of charities during the Republican period), *Fashang yanjiu* 法商研究 133.5: 155–60.

34. Liang Jiagui, *Minguo Shbandong jiaomen shi*, p. 98. Thomas DuBois, *Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China*, pp. 113–17.

35. Li Shizhong 厲時中, “Wu da shengjiao jiushi shishi ji” 五大聖教救世事實紀 (World salvation in the five sacred teachings), *Zhebao* 哲報, November 10, 1923.

之道。實行神聖宗教救世之事務……人心已壞。何以救之。世道已衰。何以救之。宗孔教曰。先正人心。宗耶教曰。廣行博愛。宗佛老者曰。渡己渡人。救苦救難。宗回教者曰。永守清真)

In the same way, the practice of charity was not merely another route to this same goal, it was the one thing that each of the Five Religions shared, the essence of each of their teachings.

With its growing network of faithful, and the backing of such well-placed figures as Xu Shiguang 徐世光, younger brother of President Xu Shichang 徐世昌, Daoyuan was poised to make its mark on the rapidly growing charitable sphere, but it soon became clear that good intentions were alone far from enough. In 1921, the same year that Daoyuan was founded, the Yellow River broke its banks, flooding dozens of villages over hundreds of *li* in northeastern Shandong. Flooding in these dusty lowlands was particularly devastating, as it destroyed agriculture and washed away earthen houses, sending waves of refugees into neighboring cities. Leaders of the newly formed Daoyuan soon found themselves faced with a massive human tragedy taking shape on their doorstep. Volunteers did what they could, gathering 120,000 *yuan* in donations, sufficient to buy food, clothing and basic possessions such as pots and pans for over 40,000, but they had been caught unprepared.<sup>36</sup>

This traumatic event, which took place so soon after Daoyuan's formation, was undoubtedly instrumental in prompting them to form the RSS as a dedicated charitable organization.<sup>37</sup> Soon after the Ji'nan Daoyuan began sending out missionaries, the Great Progenitor sent instructions to form a branch organization devoted solely to public wel-

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36. Uchida Ryōhei, "Manmō no dokuritsu to sekai kōmanjikai no undō," pp. 90–91. Li Guangwei, "Daoyuan, Daodeshe, Shijie hongwanzi hui—xinxing zongjiao cishan zuzhi de lishi kaocha," pp. 51–52. Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai*, pp. 17–18.

37. Liu Benjing 劉本靜, *Jilin yuanbui daoci shiye er shi zai gailue* 吉林院會道慈事業廿載概略 (A review of twenty years of dao and charitable work by the Jilin branch), p. 17 explains that the RSS was founded because the Daoyuan alone could not keep up with the pace of disasters.

fare. This new organization was formally inaugurated in October 28, 1922 to “provide disaster relief and advance world peace,” and would be a part of Daoyuan, yet separate from it.<sup>38</sup> In emulation of the International Red Cross, founders chose a Buddhist swastika as the symbol and name of the new society. Although the two organizations would remain technically distinct, the World Red Swastika Society quickly became the public face of Daoyuan, and the outlet for its many social, intellectual and charitable initiatives. The next year, when a similar flood devastated twelve counties along the banks of the Grand Canal in southern Zhili, it was the newly formed RSS of Tianjin that responded, sending teams out to assess damage, and raising 120,000 yuan to provide material assistance for 50,000 of those affected.<sup>39</sup>

From these beginnings, the Red Swastika Society quickly developed a sophisticated relief infrastructure, and was soon organizing relief activities on a monumental scale. Certainly there was more than enough work to be done: incessant war and natural calamity throughout China left cities and countryside alike to care for their own destitute as well as waves of refugees.<sup>40</sup> The work of the RSS during the 1920s quickly dwarfed the piecemeal charitable efforts of earlier decades. Only two years after its founding, the RSS coordinated a response to flooding in Zhili, Hunan, Hubei, Fujian and Jiangxi provinces that raised over a hundred thousand *yuan* to provide blankets, food

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38. Fang Jing 方竟 and Cai Zhuanbin 蔡傳斌, “Minguo shiqi de Shijie hong wanzi hui ji qi zhenji huodong” 民國時期的世界紅卍字會及其賑濟活動 (Early Republican World Red Swastika Society and its charitable activities), *Zhongguo shehui jingji shi yanjiu* 中國社會經濟史研究 2:75; Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai*, p. 20.

39. Shijie hong wanzi hui 世界紅卍字會, *Shijie hong wanzi hui linian zhenjiu gongzuo baogao shu* 世界紅卍字會歷年賑救工作報告書 (Annual report of RSS charitable work), pp. 5–6.

40. One estimate counts no less than 77 major natural disasters between 1911 and 1937, including 24 floods, 14 droughts, 19 earthquakes. Fang and Cai, 2005:77–78. See also Li Guangwei, “20 shiji shangbanye Zhongguo minjian cishan juzhu shiye de dianfan—Shijie hongwanzi hui Yantai fenhui xuyang yuan de lishi kaozheng.”

and medicine for over a hundred twenty thousand people. Victims of war were treated on a similar scale. In 1924 alone, RSS branches in Jjiangnan provided relief to 18,500 war refugees, a number which would grow to nearly 116,000 after the initiation of the Northern Expedition in 1925. By the mid-1930s, the largest coordinated relief efforts would reach well over a million people.

The relief efforts of the RSS grew not only larger, but also more specialized. In addition to raising money for food and clothing, the RSS also began forming dedicated teams of volunteers who could provide specialized assistance to disaster victims. As widespread warfare engulfed much of China during the mid-1920s, the RSS established triage hospitals for sick and wounded soldiers, shelters for women and children, and soup kitchens for refugees that poured into the unprepared cities. In Beijing alone, two RSS soup kitchens served well over a million free meals each. One of the most characteristic RSS activities was to organize teams of volunteers to bury the thousands of corpses that would otherwise rot on the battlefield or in the deserted homes of famine stricken villages. (See Appendix A: Major relief efforts, 1921-1931)

**Table 1: Number of meals served at RSS soup kitchens in Beijing**

	East Gate	West Gate
1928	177,564	160,475
1929	320,110	319,640
1930	274,151	216,169
1931	167,584	204,741
1932	105,120	140,121
1933	118,039	171,623

Source: *Shijie hong wanzi hui* 1932: 35-36; 1935: 42.

Along with these large-scale coordinated efforts, individual RSS branches continued to work locally. The Harbin branch, founded in August of 1922, began running a local network of soup kitchens in 1928.

By the mid-1930s, this effort had expanded to include over a hundred volunteers, who served free meals to as many as two thousand people per day, and included a free clinic to provide medical care to the city's poor.<sup>41</sup> When floods struck mountainous Chahar in 1924, local branches established ten relief stations and four soup kitchens that served over 4,800 refugees. In the coastal city of Yantai, which was largely spared the disasters faced by the interior, a branch of RSS built charitable institutions of a more durable nature. Between 1929 and 1933, RSS in Yantai built an orphanage, a hospital, and homes for the aged and disabled, as well as initiating anti-smoking campaigns. In Yantai, as elsewhere, it was the merchant and political elite who took the initiative in RSS projects.<sup>42</sup> The report of charitable activities published biannually by the RSS is mostly taken up with records of donations, ranging from the very large (both by individuals and corporate donors such as banks) to a few yuan, and including donations in kind by grain merchants.<sup>43</sup>

The brief flowering of private charities would not last long. After 1927, the newly established Nanjing government gradually moved to rein in or assimilate many of the occupational organizations, labor unions, chambers of commerce and literary associations that had formed in the previous decade.<sup>44</sup> Religions were not exempt. Buddhists and Christians were harassed, and any religion unlucky enough to be labeled heretical or superstitious was banned outright. Nor were private charities, which at least some in the new government saw as

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41. Jia Yingzhe 賈英哲, "Harbin de hong wanzihui de lishi jiazhi kaozheng" 哈爾濱的紅卍字會的歷史價值考證 (Investigation into the historical value of the Harbin Red Swastika Society), *Heilongjiang shehui kexue* 黑龍江社會科學 2:126.

42. Li Guangwei, "20 shiji shangbanye Zhongguo minjian cishan jiuizhu shiye de dianfan—Shijie hongwanzi hui Yantai fenhui xuyang yuan de lishi kaozheng."

43. Shijie hong wanzi hui, *Shijie hong wanzi hui linian zhenjiu gongzuo baogao shu*, 1930, 1932, 1935.

44. David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s*, pp. 216–21.

rife with corruption: following an accounting of sixty private charities in Nanjing, disgusted officials claimed that “not one or two out of ten provided accurate information.” Between 1928 and 1933, local and national governments enacted a series of new regulations to scrutinize the organization and funding of charities, and even very high profile international organizations such as the Red Cross found themselves facing an unusual degree of political scrutiny.<sup>45</sup> Charges of corruption aside, the new government was clearly uneasy with the strength of private charitable organizations and enacted a series of laws to exert a direct administrative control over disaster relief. Following the massive Yellow River flood of 1933, it allocated over four million yuan to refugee aid. Even if these funds were used to poor effect, one can still see in these efforts a desire not merely to bring independent civil organizations to heel, but also to take the mantle of charity from Christian missions, and groups like the RSS.<sup>46</sup> As a result, many religions, and most charities, including Daoyuan-RSS, automatically lost the legal status that they had enjoyed under the Beiyang government, and were forced to reapply for government recognition. Although in the end, Daoyuan-RSS was able to reregister with relatively little difficulty, it remained under suspicion in many quarters, owing both to the spirit-writing activities of Daoyuan, and to the continued portrayal of the RSS as a “secret society.”<sup>47</sup>

## The Price of Pacifism

The final feature of the period was violence: the near constant

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45. Gong Rufu, “Minguo shiqi jianji cishan tuanti lifa ji qi qishi,” pp. 155–56.

46. Yue Zongfu 2006; Zhang and Cai 2003; Wang Lin 2007:170.

47. Vivienne Shue, “The Quality of Mercy: Confucian Charity and the Mixed Metaphors of Modernity in Tianjin,” p. 441 mentions strained relations between the Guomindang Social Bureau and private charities in Tianjin during that same year. Xu Feng, “Nanjing zhengfu zongjiao zhengce,” p. 44; Yuancheng, *Daoci gangyao dadao pian*, p. 68; Guo Dasong, “Ji’nan Daoyuan ji Hongwanzihui zhi diaocha’ bianzheng,” pp. 24–34; Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huidaomen*, pp. 301–06.



warfare that plagued China from the death of Yuan Shikai until 1949. Of course, war and war relief go hand in hand: it was the growing frequency and violence of war in Europe that had led to the creation and expansion of the Red Cross during the nineteenth century. The unique difficulties that relief organizations would face in a militarized environment had also shaped their outlook and tactics, most notably their guarantee of neutrality. In China, the Red Cross had already displayed this stance in conflicts such as the 1911 Revolution, and the Red Swastika Society followed suit in providing relief to victims of the domestic wars of the 1920s.<sup>48</sup> Like the Red Cross, they responded by announcing their neutrality to all belligerents, entering the ruins of battle bearing their symbol on flags and tunics, and giving aid to any wounded soldier who approached them unarmed.

As Duara and others have noted, the practical issue of providing relief to both sides of a military conflict reflected an ethical stance of placing human need above politics, including national loyalties. Soon after its founding, the RSS began limited operations outside of China, and despite the growing wave of anti-Japanese sentiment during the 1920s, their first destination was Japan. Again, the impetus was provided by external events, the Kantō Earthquake that decimated Tokyo region in 1923. In response to this disaster, the RSS sent three representatives: (Hou) Sushuang 侯素爽, (Feng) Huahe 馮華和, and (Yang) Yuancheng 楊圓誠 to Japan to deliver 2,000 shi of rice, and a message of goodwill.<sup>49</sup> But this was not their only mission. Before leaving China, Sushuang had met in Nanjing with the Japanese consul to Ningbo, Hayashide Kenjirō 林出賢次郎, who gave him a book about a new Japanese religion named Ōmotokyō 大本教, the Teaching of the Great Source. After Huahe and Yuancheng had already returned to China via the port city of Kobe (where they converted a handful of influential Chinese, including the vice consul and the head of the Chinese Cham-

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48. Chi Zihua 池子華, “Zhongguo hong shizi hui Xinhai zhan shi jiu hu xing dong” 中國紅十字會辛亥戰時救護行動 (Relief activities of the Chinese Red Cross during the fighting of 1911), *Minguo dang'an* 民國檔案 1:40–46.

49. Most materials omit the surnames.

ber of Commerce), Sushuang stayed on to meet with Deguchi Onisaburō 出口王仁三郎, Ōmotokyō's charismatic leader.<sup>50</sup> The two immediately perceived significant similarities between their respective teachings, and with Deguchi's blessing, Daoyuan opened its first foreign branch in Kobe in 1924. Both sides were willing to learn from each other; two years after this meeting, Deguchi went on to found the Universal Love and Brotherhood Association (Jinrui aizenkai 人類愛善會), a charitable organization very similar to the RSS. Yuancheng would retain close ties with Deguchi, and returned to Japan after the smaller Kansai earthquake of 1927.<sup>51</sup>

Observers such as Uchida Ryōhei 内田良平, an advocate of Japanese continental expansion, and active member of Ōmotokyō, would later portray these events as the beginning of a clear trajectory that propelled RSS and other ethically minded Chinese to Japan, but we should not overestimate the importance of this internationalist sentiment, nor underestimate the patriotism of RSS's Chinese members. The mission to Japan had indeed laid the foundation for a cosmopolitan alliance that included both influential Japanese in China, and Chinese in Japan, and certainly enhanced the identity of the RSS as an international organization in the model of the Red Cross. But despite their high profile, such international efforts paled in comparison to the work of the RSS within China itself. While the 2,000 *shi* (approximately 145,000 kg) of rice that the 1923 mission brought to Kobe was

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50. Sushuang and Huahe were at the time affiliated with Daoyuan in Ji'nan and Beijing, respectively. Yuancheng, the author of one source, does not give much information about his own background, except to state that he held simultaneous positions in Daoyuan in Ji'nan, Nanjing and Beijing. Shijie hong wanzi hui, *Shijie hong wanzi hui linian zhenjiu gongzuo baogao shu*, p. 11; Yuancheng, *Daoci gangyao dadao pian*, p. 80. On Ōmotokyō, see Li Narangoa, "Universal Values and Pan-Asianism: The vision of Ōmotokyō." In *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders*, edited by Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann, pp. 52–66.

51. RSS made a donation of 5,000 yuan through the Japanese consul to relief efforts, Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huidaomen*, p. 185.

certainly much more than a token gesture, a 1928 relief effort closer to home distributed no less than 80,000 *shi*, much of which was donated by nationalistically-minded grain merchants. The RSS was only one of forty major Chinese donors to Japanese earthquake relief, nor was it even the most significant. The Chinese government itself made a sizeable donation, and Foreign Ministry Head Wellington Koo (顧維鈞), had called for patriotic Chinese to aid their neighbors in a time of distress, even going as far as to suggest that the Chinese government itself should take charge of the relief effort: “China is grounded in the ethic of aiding the stricken and helping neighbors, and cannot stand idly by. The government should take charge, and urge all of its citizens to send aid” (我國本救災恤鄰之義, 不容袖手旁觀, 應由政府下令, 勸國民共同籌款賑恤).<sup>52</sup> Given the growing tensions between the two countries, aid for Japan was more than humanitarian in motive; such a display of Chinese magnanimity was also diplomatically useful for China. This and other RSS efforts overseas were aided by Chinese diplomats, and demonstrate the clout the group carried in political circles. When a Chinese attempt to seize the Russian-owned China Eastern Railway in 1928 prompted a brief but disastrous border conflict with the Soviet Union, teams of RSS doctors were sent to the railway cities of Harbin, Manzhouli and Suifenhe. Pinned down by Soviet shelling, these teams appealed to the Foreign Ministry in Nanjing, which assured Soviet authorities (through third country diplomatic intermediaries) that the group was solely interested in providing medical relief.<sup>53</sup>

This balance of interests shifted dramatically after the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931. The quick but brutal assault on Chinese territory presented a real challenge to the naive internationalism expressed by people such as Jiang Xizhang during the early days of the

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52. Li Xuezhong 李學智, “1923 nian Zhongguo ren dui Riben zhenzai de chenjiu xingdong” 1923 年中國人對日本震災的賑救行動 (Chinese charitable responses to the Japanese earthquake of 1923), *Jindai shi yanjiu* 近代史研究 3:281.

53. Shijie hong wanzi hui, *Shijie hong wanzi hui linian zhenjiu gongzuo baogao shu* 1932:1–2; 1935:24.

Confucian revival, and left organizations like the RSS in a very difficult position. In the wake of the fighting, local branches mobilized to provide what relief they could to the civilian population.<sup>54</sup> Representatives from Beijing, Tianjin, Jiaodong, Yingkou, and Andong met in Dalian to coordinate efforts to feed and clothe the multitude of refugees that was just beginning to pour south. Relief stations in Shenyang began feeding 5,000 per day, a number that eventually rose to 20,000. It is hard to say how neutral members of the RSS actually were in the conflict, but all parties involved had an interest in maintaining that appearance. RSS leaders did contact the Japanese high command, but only with the very modest request of being allowed to organize teams of volunteers to bury the dead. The beginnings of what would become the Manchukuo propaganda machine presented a somewhat rosier picture. During the final months of 1931, the Japanese-owned *Shengjing Times* (盛京時報, already the highest circulation Chinese language daily in Manchuria) frequently reported on RSS activities, but did not dwell on their response to the war. Rather, it portrayed RSS branches in cities such as Dalian, which was largely spared the ill effects of the fighting, raising funds for relief from natural disasters in Manchuria, as well for flood-ravaged provinces further south. Other articles presented the local RSS opening a new school, and funding a Buddhist festival in Huadian 樺甸, near Changchun. One short article briefly mentioned that the Changchun branch had begun operation of a soup kitchen, but stated the reason simply as expectation of a cold winter.<sup>55</sup>

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54. It should be noted that the charitable sector in Manchuria was already highly developed and extremely cosmopolitan. In addition to a foundation of medical institutions created by Scottish Presbyterian missionaries, there was also a highly developed plague prevention infrastructure, which was formed in response to the pneumonic epidemic of 1910–1911, and enjoyed the support of the Nanjing government and the League of Nations. The Manchurian Plague Prevention Service ceased operations in 1931. See Wu Lien-teh 伍連德, *Plague Fighter: The Autobiography of a Modern Chinese Physician*, pp. 375–402.

55. Even after the fighting in Manchuria had commenced, Dalian merchants connected with RSS made interest-free loans worth tens of thousands of

The seizure of Manchuria and formation of the Japanese-sponsored state of Manchukuo cut the local Daoyuan-RSS off from the national organization, but even before these events, the network of branches in the northeast had already been developing into something of an independent entity. The teaching had first moved north during the early 1920s, and initially required a period of nurturing: even large branches like Jilin had to occasionally send leaders to study at the Mother Daoyuan in Ji'nan.<sup>56</sup> Yet by the end of the decade, a time when Daoyuan expansion in the rest of China had begun to wane, a burst of new energy invigorated the northeast.<sup>57</sup> With the Shenyang Daoyuan at the center, new Manchurian branches were opened, ties between existing Daoyuan were rejuvenated, and groups of RSS branches banded together to mount regional relief efforts. In one unique expression of unity, a text called the *Essence of the True Scripture of the Polar Singularity* (*Taiyi beiqi zhenjing jingsui* 太乙北極真經經髓) rotated among Daoyuan in Manchuria. Daoyuan in Beijing and Tianjin had each begun preaching introductory sections of this scripture in 1929, after which the movement moved north, with Daoyuan in Shenyang, Yingkou, Binjiang, Changchun, Dalian and Andong each expounding one section. Over the next 33 days, the network of Manchurian Daoyuan had preached the entire scripture.<sup>58</sup>

This core of Manchurian Daoyuan had already begun gravitating

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yuan to flood stricken provinces in the south. A collection of Japanese businesses and newspapers made a high profile donation to the same relief effort. *Shengjing shibao*, 1931: September 2, 4, 15, October 15, 17, November 1, December 8, 9. This particular newspaper had been owned and operated by the Japanese Mantetsu consortium since 1923. Thomas David DuBois, "Japanese Media and Manchurian Cultural Community: Religion in the Shengjing Times, 1907–1944," in *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia*. Edited by idem, pp. 217–38.

56. Liu Benjing, *Jilin yuanhui daoci shiye er shi zai gailue*, pp. 25–27, 33.

57. Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai*, p. 33.

58. Yuancheng, *Daoci gangyao dadao pian*, pp. 89–91; Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai*, pp. 33–34.

towards Japan through their relationship with Ōmotokyō. In 1929, a flurry of spirit writings in Beijing and Shenyang laid the plans for a Daoyuan mission to Japan. This “Eastern Sea Mission” (Dongying budao tuan 東瀛佈道團) was to become very much a Manchurian project: fourteen of its eighteen members came from the Northeast, seven from Shenyang alone.<sup>59</sup> Once in Japan, the mission visited Kobe, Kameoka and Osaka before reaching Kyoto, where they again met with Deguchi. This meeting named Deguchi as the head of the small but expanding network of Japanese Daoyuan, in return for which he agreed to visit China that August. Daoyuan delegates also promised to send a second mission to the Great Religions Exposition (Dai shūkyō hakurankai 大宗教博覽會), to be held in Kyoto in February of the following year.<sup>60</sup> This Second Eastern Sea Mission, like the first, consisted primarily of delegates from Manchuria. (In this case, seven of the nine delegates came from Andong, one from Dalian, and another from Beijing.) It was only after this trip that the two teachings formally merged, thus giving nearly five hundred branches of Ōmotokyō in Japan a new dual identity as Daoyuan.<sup>61</sup>

While we cannot know how typical such sentiment might have been within Manchurian Daoyuan before 1932, it is obvious why those interested in the Manchukuo project would wish to exaggerate the ties between RSS and Japan, and the enthusiasm within RSS for an internationalism that might resemble Japanese pan-Asianism. Perhaps the best example of this sort of wishful thinking is Uchida’s 1931 *The World Red Swastika Society and the Manchuria-Mongolia Independence Movement*. Published soon after the commencement of hostili-

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59. Yuancheng, *Daoci gangyao dadao pian*, pp. 80–82, 94–96.

60. On the popularity of the Ōmotokyō at the Great Religions Exposition, see Nancy Stalker, “Showing Faith: Exhibiting Ōmoto to Consumers in Early Twentieth Century Japan,” in *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia*. Edited by Thomas David DuBois, pp. 239–56.

61. Uchida Ryōhei, *Manmō no dokuritsu to sekai kōmanjikai no undō*, p. 109; Yuancheng, *Daoci gangyao dadao pian*, pp. 94–101; Kōa shūkyō kyōkai, *Sekai Kōmanjikai Dōin no jittai*, p. 30.

ties, but before the actual founding of Manchukuo, this short book aimed to convince Japanese readers of their natural allies in the contested territory. Only after spending eighty pages, more than half of the book, reminding readers of the vital economic and military importance of Manchuria to Japan (a relationship that Uchida and many others termed the “Manchurian lifeline” 生命線 *seimei sen*), does the book finally go on to introduce the RSS itself, albeit in terms designed to appeal particularly to the Japanese reader.<sup>62</sup> In describing the religious beliefs of Daoyuan, Uchida simultaneously reaches out to a number of audiences, employing again the dichotomy between their essential (*xiantian* 先天) and common (*houtian* 後天) meanings, in order to compare the teaching to the “Way of the Gods” (*kannagara no michi* 惟神の道), an unambiguous reference to Shinto. He ends with an implicit reference to Ōmotokyō, the Teaching of the Great Source.

“The ‘Dao’ in Daoyuan refers to the great Way of the Gods, it most decidedly does not derive from Daoism. Actually, ‘Dao’ has both a *xiantian* and a *houtian* meaning. Daoyuan is most certainly not a religion. It is a pure belief organization (信仰團體 *shinkō dantai*) whose teaching spreads the *xiantian* meaning (of Dao) that is, the great Way of the Gods, and is purely devoted to reform of the world. The Way that Daoyuan promotes is that all things being from a single source. It is extremely inclusive.”<sup>63</sup>

Uchida further makes the tenuous case that Daoyuan actively supported Japanese intervention in Manchuria. He begins with the ideo-

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62. See Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*, pp. 88–95.

63. *Xiantian* and *houtian* are often translated literally as Former and Latter Heaven, but here and in other Daoyuan writings, the terms refer respectively to a true, original essence, and the limited understanding used in the current world. This conception is comparable to the two levels of meaning discussed in Primal Singularity. No doubt many Japanese readers would have recognized the similar idea of “true essence and manifest traces” (*bonji suijaku* 本地垂瀨) from Japanese Mahayana Buddhism. Uchida Ryōhei, *Manmō no dokuritsu to sekai kōmanjikai no undō*, p. 85.

logical argument: since its teaching of unity among religions and nations was so perfectly in tune with the promise of an independent Manchuria, that Daoyuan branches throughout the country would naturally welcome Japanese liberation from Chinese misrule. He notes that late in 1931, just as provincial governments in Manchuria were severing ties with Nanjing, the Daoyuan of Japan (i.e., Ōmotokyō) sent a message to their brethren in Manchuria and Beijing encouraging them to take hold of this unique opportunity to “press on for the common good of all humanity, the benefit of society, and peace and unity in the world.” He further claims that spirit writings foretold the Manchurian independence movement before it broke out, but offers no proof more substantial than a few vague statements about Chinese-Japanese unity.<sup>64</sup> The weakest argument is the claim that the leadership of the RSS represented the progressive elite of Manchuria, who were eager and prepared to take the reins of a new state. Here again, Uchida proves stronger on slogans than evidence, and is only able to mention a handful of military figures such as Zhang Haipeng (張海鵬) and Tang Yulin (湯玉麟) as specific examples.<sup>65</sup>

The problem with using such sources to trace Daoyuan ideology is that it is difficult to know where Uchida’s understanding of Daoyuan stops and his own thoughts begin. As Uchida was himself an enthusiastic convert to Ōmotokyō, and believed unreservedly that the teachings of Ōmotokyō and Daoyuan were “absolutely the same,” it is not at all clear that he was particularly concerned with such distinctions. He confidently places into the mouth of Manchurian Daoyuan

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64. Many of the spirit writings Uchida cites center upon on Deguchi, often with his Dao name of Xunren 尋仁. Messages attributed to the Great Progenitor predict that Deguchi’s light or teaching will spread across the Eastern Sea, a vision of Asian spiritual unity that closely mirrored that of Japanese imperialism.

65. At the time of writing, both were former members of Zhang Zuolin’s military command. Zhang would go on to lead the military campaign against loyalist general Ma Zhanshan, and the capture of Rehe. Tang was later named governor of Rehe Province. Uchida Ryōhei, *Manmō no dokuritsu to sekai kōmanjikai no undō*, pp. 103–05, 111–12.



(or more specifically, the Great Progenitor) the grand political ideal of the “Bright Land,” (Ming guang guo/Meikōkoku 明光國), which Uchida describes as nothing less than the “the unity of god and man in an independent kingdom.” He further asserts that the entire organization would be willing to work towards building this new state “in the land of the Xiongnu” as a foundation for the “unity and mutual benefit” of the people of Japan and China. Here again, Uchida is speaking of Japanese Daoyuan, in other words, of Ōmotokyō. Like many of the ideas he attributes to Chinese Daoyuan, the idea of a “Bright Land” in Manchuria in fact derives from Deguchi, who had as early as 1926 sent one of his followers to Tianjin to promote it to Pu Yi.<sup>66</sup>

Wishful thinking or willful misrepresentation aside, the founding of Manchukuo ushered in a new era for RSS in the Northeast. In March of 1934, the same month that Pu Yi ascended to the throne and Manchukuo was upgraded to the status of empire, local Daoyuan leaders met in Changchun, recently christened the New Capital (Xinjing 新京), and formally broke all ties with Beijing and Ji’nan. The newly named “Daoyuan—World Red Swastika Society of Manchukuo” 滿洲國總道院世界紅卍字會 now found itself under a completely new set of leaders, few of whom had been particularly prominent in the organization before 1932.<sup>67</sup>

The organization prospered. In 1934, the Manchukuo Daoyuan-RSS moved its headquarters from Shenyang to a new building, built in the style of a Chinese temple on a busy corner of the main thoroughfare in New Capital. There it attracted a significant following among prominent Chinese members of the Manchukuo government, such as

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66. Li Narangoa, “Universal Values and Pan-Asianism: The vision of Ōmotokyō,” p. 62; Uchida Ryōhei, *Manmō no dokuritsu to sekai kōmanjikai no undō*, pp. 117–18.

67. Manshūkoku kokumin minseibu, kōseishi kyōkaka 滿州國国民生部厚生司教化科 (Manchukuo National Assembly, Department of People’s Livelihood, Welfare Division, Culture Section), *Manshūkoku Dōen Kōmanjikai no gaiyō* 滿洲國道院紅卍字會の概要 (Overview of the Daoyuan Red Swastika Society in Manchukuo). Kyōka dantai chōsa shiryō 2, pp. 161–75.

Xi Qia 熙洽, Zhang Jinghui 張景惠, Yu Zhishan 于芷山 and Sun Qichang 孫其昌.<sup>68</sup> The general Zhang Haipeng, identified by Uchida early on, became its national president. The mass membership grew, as well. Between 1932 and 1941, the number of branches expanded from 35 to 99. In three years, from 1939 to 1941, the number of members more than doubled from 5,151 to 13,954, while the operating budget of the Manchukuo RSS mushroomed from 448,736 to 1,295,253 *yuan*.<sup>69</sup>

**Table 2: Number of Daoyuan in Manchuria/Manchukuo, by year**

	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
New	1	4	7	10	6	2	5	4
Total	1	5	12	22	28	30	35	39

	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
New	22	15	2	2	0	2	9	8
Total	61	76	78	80	80	82	91	99

Source: Manshūkoku kokumuin minseibu, 1943:169–70.

Yet, in spite of what appears to have been a mutually beneficial relationship, both the Daoyuan-RSS and the government of Manchukuo were careful to maintain a certain distance from each other. At no point was Daoyuan actually persecuted, nor does it appear to have been directly affected by the turn against Ōmotokyō within Japan (following the Second Ōmoto Incident of 1935). Nor, however, did it have any official place in Manchukuo propaganda or policy. It certainly was not promoted in the government-controlled press. While the activities

68. Xi Qia was a former general, and later the Minister of Finance and Minister of the Interior for Manchukuo. Zhang Jinghui, Yu Zhishan, while Sun held a variety of mid-level positions. See also DuBois 2008.

69. Manshūkoku kokumuin minseibu, *Manshūkoku Dōen Kōmanjikai no gaiyō*, pp. 162–65.

and personages related to Confucianism, Shinto, certain sects of Buddhism (notably Soto Zen and Ōtani Pure Land), and the Catholic Church were all highly visible in the pages of government controlled publications like the *Sbengjing Times*, mention of Daoyuan and RSS fell off dramatically after 1931. Nor did organizations like the Unity Society (Xiehe hui/kyōwa kai 協和會), an umbrella association created in February 1936 to lead and coordinate a variety of social engineering initiatives, ever officially promote the organization. Each issue of The Unity Movement (kyōwa Undō 協和運動), the society's monthly magazine, contained at least two-dozen articles, including frequent pieces on religion, reverence for the emperor, "national spirit" (*jianguo jingshen* 建國精神), and the various state-led campaigns promoted to raise public morality. Yet in a six-year print run, it never once mentioned Daoyuan or the RSS by name.<sup>70</sup> The reticence seems to have originated in the Japanese side: while many Chinese within the Manchukuo government were well-known Daoyuan-RSS members, their Japanese counterparts tended to steer clear of public association with either group. One of the more visible Daoyuan initiatives in Manchukuo, performance of rituals at the grave of a Confucian "filial son" (*xiaozi* 孝子) in the center of New Capital, attracted numerous high-ranking Chinese members of the Manchukuo government, yet Japanese officials remained conspicuously absent.<sup>71</sup>

But further south, the Japanese attack on Chinese soil had pushed idealistic internationalism to the breaking point. RSS branches in Beijing, Tianjin and Shandong had all been involved in the Manchurian relief effort of 1931, and just one year later, the Japanese assault on Shanghai prompted those in Jiangnan to organize their own response as well. In conjunction with other charitable societies, the RSS in Shanghai alone created six temporary hospitals, provided medical care to thousands of soldiers and civilians, and sheltered tens of thousands of refugees. Japanese troops had apparently come to know and trust

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70. Manshū teikoku kyōwa kai 滿州帝国協和会, *Kyōwa Undō* 協和運動 (the Unity Movement). September, 1939-April, 1945.

71. Thomas David DuBois, "Manchukuo's Filial Sons: States, Sects and the Transformation of Graveside Piety," *East Asian History* 35:3-27.

the RSS (in the wake of the Manchuria fighting, one report proudly announced that “Chinese and foreign personnel all recognized how those wearing the swastika ignored the danger and put all their energies to providing relief on a huge scale. How could anyone not admire such an achievement?” 中外人士見我卍會不避危險努力救人規模宏大成績昭著均爲人所難能莫不同深欽佩), but as first-hand witnesses to the suffering caused by Japanese assaults on Chinese cities, it would be hard to imagine its members retaining any of the high-minded internationalist sentiment once expressed by people such as Yuancheng, much less the affection for Japan portrayed by Uchida.<sup>72</sup> Internationalist discourse aside, the actions of the RSS revealed strong nationalist sympathies, as members pursued a variety of national and international contacts to pursue what contemporaries referred to as “citizen diplomacy” (*guomin waijiao* 國民外交) on China’s behalf.<sup>73</sup> In 1933, as Chinese diplomats sought frantically to secure international condemnation of Japanese actions in Manchuria, the RSS made a massive donation of 100,000 yuan to victims of an earthquake in Los Angeles though the vocally pro-Chinese American ambassador Nelson T. Johnson. More than just an expression of goodwill, this gesture (for which RSS was rewarded with a letter of thanks from President Roosevelt himself) was most certainly also an attempt to reach out to the United States as a diplomatic ally.<sup>74</sup> In the wake of the massacre at Nanjing, the Red Swastika Society was one of many Chinese organizations that sought shelter in the foreign concessions of Shanghai, and emerging to establish shelters and soup kitchens. According to one report, Swastika Society volunteers provided relief for over a hundred thousand. In

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72. Shijie hong wanzi hui, *Shijie hong wanzi hui linian zhenjiu gongzuo baogao shu*, pp. 6–9.

73. Zhou Bin 周斌, “Qingmo-Minchu ‘guomin waijiao’ yici de xingcheng ji qi hanyi shulun” 清末民初「國民外交」一詞的形成及其含義述論 (Essay on the development and implied meaning of the term “citizen diplomacy” in the late Qing and early Republic), *Anhui shixue* 安徽史學 5:22–32.

74. Shijie hong wanzi hui, *Shijie hong wanzi hui linian zhenjiu gongzuo baogao shu*, pp. 16–17.

Nanjing alone, they disposed of over 27,000 corpses.<sup>75</sup>

The Guomindang retreat to Sichuan left the Daoyuan-Red Swastika Society in a difficult position. Throughout North China, the Red Swastika Society maintained a working relationship with Japanese-sponsored authorities. Some of these figures, such as the widely reviled governor of Shandong, Tang Yangdu 唐仰杜, actively promoted the society and its activities. As in Manchukuo, Japanese authorities themselves appear to have been cordial but wary of forming too close a bond, preferring instead a long-term strategy of replacing the RSS with groups of their own making, such as the New People's Society (Xinmin hui 新民會) and Pacification Teams (Xuanfu ban/Senbu han 宣撫班).<sup>76</sup> Few records of RSS activities in wartime Sichuan exist, most likely because the organization had never been particularly strong there. Befitting the group's many protestations of internationalist neutrality, there was never any sort of public rift between the branches in Japanese, Guomindang or Communist controlled territory,

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75. "Shijie hongwanzi hui Nanjing da tusha hou yanmai jiuji gongzuo baogao" 世界紅卍字會南京大屠殺後掩埋救急工作報告 (Report on burial and relief efforts of the Red Swastika Society following the Nanjing Massacre), *Dang'an yu shixue* 檔案與史學 4:11–18. Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huidaomen*, p. 390, cites a higher figure of 31,791 burials.

76. On the Pacification Teams, see Cao Dajun 曹大臣, "Ribei zhanling Huazhong chuqi de jiceng kongzhi moshi—yi Taicang xian wei zhongxin (1937–1940)" 日本佔領華中初期的基層控制模式——以太倉縣為中心 (1937–1940) [Modes of control during the early Japanese occupation of central China—the case of Taicang county] 2004.1, *Minguo dang'an* 民國檔案: 60–65; Liu Dage 劉大可, "Shandong lunxian qu Xinminhui ji qi huodong" 山東淪陷區新民會及其活動 [The New People's Society and its activities in occupied areas of Shandong], *Shandong shehui kexue* 山東社會科學 3:50–55; Zhang Taishan 張泰山, "Lun kangzhan shiqi Ri-Wei zai Hubei lunxian qu de wenhua kongzhi moshi" 論抗戰時期日偽在湖北淪陷區的文化控制模式 [On the model of cultural control in the occupied regions of Hubei during the anti-Japanese War] 第7卷第4期 *Wuban keji daxue xuebao* (shehui kexue ban) 武漢科技大學學報(社會科學版)7.4: 30–34.

nor was RSS censured by the Guomindang government for continuing its work under the Japanese occupation. (It is also worth noting that the RSS was one of the few groups of this sort to have escaped the charge of Japanese collaboration after the founding of the People's Republic.) This is not to say that the Guomindang government embraced the organization entirely. In 1940, the party Mobilization Committee (Dongyuan weiyuan hui 動員委員會) enacted an anti-superstition law, which banned heretical teachings and their writings, and singled out Daoyuan by name for special castigation. The Red Swastika Society was also mentioned: it would be allowed to continue its charitable work, so long as it broke all ties with Daoyuan.<sup>77</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

Whatever we choose to call them, the religious movements that arose during the early twentieth century did represent a distinct period of innovation. That is not to say that they were entirely new: their basic religious beliefs and practices, ethical and charitable impulses all had deep roots in the ideas and institutions of the late imperial era. But the setting was fundamentally different. At a stroke, the Republican government had abolished centuries of regulation, allowing both religious and charitable societies to grow to national prominence, and to strive (at least for a time) for a place in the public eye that would previously have been unimaginable. Unbounded confidence in global transformation, the same sentiment that had animated interwar movements from Christian mission to the Communist International, also breathed new life into a Confucian tradition that a new generation of post-imperial intellectuals hoped to present as China's unique contribution to world culture.<sup>78</sup>

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77. Shao Yong, *Zhongguo buidaomen*, p. 391.

78. In doing so, they were not alone: many Japanese contemporaries had envisioned a similar role for Zen Buddhism. See Judith Snodgrass, "Publishing Eastern Buddhism: D.T Suzuki's journey to the West," in *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia*, edited by Thomas David DuBois, pp. 46–74.

The shift to charity was motivated both by need and by opportunity, and fundamentally changed the course of religious movements such as Daoyuan. Like lay religion, the charitable sector was primed for rapid expansion. The number and ambition of public charities had already been rising since the late nineteenth century, and exploded as the collapse of the Beiyang government left millions in desperate need of relief. The eclipse of Daoyuan by the Red Swastika Society shows how quickly charity could change from sideline to primary focus. As Daoyuan itself came under suspicion, the charitable persona of the Red Swastika Society provided cover, not only for the group itself, but also for the wide variety of political elites that wished to engage with it. Charity was not, however, merely a “Trojan horse” for proselytization.<sup>79</sup> Like the Buddhism-infused social activism of political figures such as Wang Yiting (王一亭), or the policy aims of Buddhist reformers such as the monk Taixu (太虛), the complex mixture of motivations and interests that fueled the work of the Red Swastika Society defy simple characterization as religious, charitable or political.<sup>80</sup>

But viewed another way, this sort of ambiguity also brought real problems. Duara has correctly emphasized the internationalist credentials and aims of the Daoyuan-RSS, placing the movement in the context of an interwar trend that also included pan-Asianism, pan-Islam, Esperanto, international labor, and world socialism. But the other side of this coin (and indeed, one of its primary motivations) was the growing strength and ambition of states, particularly in East Asia. The Nanjing government’s well-known mistrust of civil society came not merely from a fear of political opposition, but also from an unprecedented ambition to control and regulate society within a legal-administrative framework. I would argue that the client state of Manchukuo repre-

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79. Bernard Formoso uses this term to characterize the use of charitable activities by the Morality Teaching in Southeast Asia today. Bernard Formoso, *De Jiao: A Religious Movement in Contemporary China and Overseas: Purple qi from the East*.

80. Paul R. Katz, “Wang Yiting and the Enchantment of Chinese Modernity,” paper presented at International Conference on Folk Confucianism and Redemptive Societies, Fo Guang University, Taiwan, June 9–10, 2009.

sented the next step in this process. Not only was Manchukuo understandably obsessed with its own security, it was also a created society, one that was to be engineered by state planners, and left little room for real public initiative. Even the separation of the Manchukuo Red Swastika Society into an independent organization seems to have earned the group relatively little in the way of institutional protection. Powerful people within the Nanjing and Manchukuo governments may have been willing to work with the RSS as individuals, but both regimes remained wary of extending anything more than episodic approval.



**Appendix A: Major RSS Relief Efforts 1921–1933**

Year	Crisis	Response from	Response
1921	Yellow River flood, Shandong	Ji'nan Daoyuan, local benefactors	Raised 120,000 <i>yuan</i> . Bought food and coats for 40,000.
1923	Grand Canal flood, 18 counties in Zhili	Tianjin	Raised 120,000 <i>yuan</i> . Provided relief to 50,000.
1924	Floods in Zhili, Hunan, Hubei, Ji-anxi, Fujian	Coordinated national effort	Raised 100,000 <i>yuan</i> . Provided relief for 120,000.
	Flood, Chahar	Chahar	Raised 10,000 <i>yuan</i> . Established 10 shelters and four soup kitchens. Buried over 100.
	War in Jiangnan	Nanjing-Wuxi	Provided food and clothing for 32,800 refugees.
	Zhi-Feng wars	Central hui (Beijing)	Provided 2,000 <i>shi</i> of grain ( <i>bongliang</i> ) for over 10,000 refugees.
1925	War in Jiangnan-Huaihai. War in Jinzhou and near Tianjin.	Thirty teams from Taiyuan, Chahar, Tianjin and Ji'nan	Sheltered or treated 115,900 soldiers and civilians. Buried 5,200. Sheltered 54,000 women and children.
1925	War in Huaihai	Nanjing-Hangzhou	Donated 7,100 sacks of flour and 17,000 coats. Rescued 26,200 people.
	War along Jin-Pu railway	Beijing, Tianjin	Donated 800 <i>shi</i> of rice and 4,000 coats. Rescued 6,800.
	War in Shandong	Ji'nan-Jining-Tai'an	Aided 35,000.
1926	War in Tianjin area	Beijing-Tianjin-Ji'nan	Donated over 10,000 <i>shi</i> of grain, 5,000 coats. Aided 57,500.
1927	War along Jin-Pu railway	Ji'nan-Xuzhou-Nanjing	Raised over 40,000 <i>yuan</i> . Donated 5,000 <i>shi</i> of grain, and 7,000 sacks of flour. Aided 162,500.

	War in Chahar	Chahar	Raised 10,000 yuan, donated 6,000 <i>shi</i> of grain. Aided 80,000.
1928	War, drought and pests in 60 counties of Shandong	Manchurian Wanguo daode hui, with charitable organizations in Fengtian, Jilin, Heilongjiang and Rehe	Donated 80,000 <i>shi</i> of grain. Sponsored free rail travel for ten thousand homeless to migrate to Manchuria.
		Ji'nan	Established 10 soup kitchens. Raised grain to feed a million people.
		Beijing-Baoding	Donated 10,000 <i>shi</i> of grain to 100,000.
	Yellow River floods, Shandong	Ji'nan	Donated 10,000 <i>yuan</i> . 1,500 <i>shi</i> of grain.
		Hangzhou	Donated 2,000 <i>yuan</i> , 200 <i>shi</i> of millet.
	War in Tianjin and Hebei	Guomindang government	Donated 40,000 <i>yuan</i> .
		Tianjin	Donated 4,000 <i>shi</i> of grain. Aided 345,000.
		Yan (Xishan?) and Tianjin mayor	Donated 20,000 and 3,000 <i>yuan</i> , respectively. Purchased 437,565 <i>jin</i> of corn for 12 assistance stations in Beijing. Aided 218,700.
1929	Border war with Soviet Union	All branches in Manchuria, organized by Beijing and Shenyang.	Formed hospital and triage teams. Buried 150 corpses, treated 520 soldiers.

1930	War in Shandong-Hebei	National effort. Individual and coordinated responses from branches across the country.	Altogether provided medical relief to 158,000 soldiers and civilians. Gave shelter to 56,000 women and children. Buried over 3,000 corpses.
1931	War in southern Hebei	Beijing - Tianjin	Established four shelters and two medical centers. Sheltered 4,000 women and children. Provided medical care to over 1,000 soldiers and civilians, and buried 230 corpses.
1931	Japanese aggression in Manchuria	Coordinated response from Beijing-Ji'nan-Jiaodong and all Manchurian branches.	Received permission from Japanese military to bury over 400 corpses. Treated 100 wounded soldiers, and buried 207 corpses in Changchun. Treated 89 soldiers and buried 206 in Binjiang. Donated 300 <i>shi</i> of millet and established 19 shelters for refugees. Raised 5,000 <i>yuan</i> for soup kitchens in Shenyang and Changchun, and 3,000-4,000 <i>yuan</i> for clothes.
1932	Japanese attack on Shanghai	Shanghai branch and other charitable societies	Established 6 hospitals, each of which took in from 2,000 to 17,000 people, and gave medical care to up to 300. Sheltered 26,000. Buried 200 corpses.

International			
1923	Kanto Earthquake		Donated 2,000 <i>shi</i> of rice
1927	Kansai Earthquake		Donated 5,000 <i>yuan</i> through Japanese consul

1933	Los Angeles Earthquake		Donated 100,000 <i>yuan</i> though US Ambassador Nelson T. Johnson
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One *shi* is approximately 72.5 kg.

Source: Shijie hong wanzi hui 世界紅卍子會. *Shijie hong wanzi hui linian zhenjiu gongzuo baogao shu* 世界紅卍子會歷年賑救工作報告書. 1930: 1–25; 1932: 1–33; 1935: 1–31.

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## 宗教救濟？ 民初的新興宗教與慈善團體的演變

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**摘要：**成立於1921年的道院，把對靈學與日俱增的興趣和帝制結束後方興未艾的市民孔教，結合起來。爲了應對缺乏有效政府服務的局面，道院在次年成立了慈善團體——「紅卍字會」。紅卍字會在政治上得到許多名流的支持，所以很快就開始組織大規模的賑濟活動。但是，它最終仍將和新成立的南京政府發生衝突。同時，卍字會裡的成員和日本愈發親近，並且跟一個被稱之爲「大本教」的日本新宗教結成了思想同盟，並最終成爲日本的附屬國——滿洲國——扶植下的一個獨立組織。和南京中央政府一樣，滿洲國政府在給予該會制度上支持的時候，非常小心翼翼；而且，它開始爲隸屬於自己的、處在國家直接控制之下的慈善組織奠定根基。所以本文認爲，與其把道院／紅卍字會之類的組織看成是新的社會現象，倒不如把其視爲對特定的政治和社會環境的反映。

**關鍵詞：**慈善，新興宗教，道院，世界紅卍字會，滿洲國，市民社會。