

Heming Wang

The General Theory of China's Genealogy



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SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY PRESS



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Heming Wang
Shanghai Library
Shanghai, China

Translated by
Jun He
East China University of Science
and Technology
Shanghai, China

Junnong Xu
Hefei Normal University
Hefei, China

Kerry Allen
London, UK

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About the Author

Heming Wang is the director of the Institute of Historical Documents at Shanghai Library and an award-winning Chinese genealogist. He is the author of more than ten books, including *The General Theory of Ancestral Temples in China*, *A History of China's Genealogy*, *Revealing China's Genealogical Culture*, and *The General Theory of Ethnic Minority Genealogies in China*.

Part I
Concepts and Definitions

Chapter 1

Introduction



1.1 What Is Genealogy?

As this book is titled *The General Theory of Chinese Genealogy* 中国家谱通论, readers will naturally ask: What is genealogy? There are many different books covering different aspects of genealogy, such as *jiapu* 家谱 (family genealogy), *zongpu* 宗谱 (patrilineal genealogy) and *zupu* 族谱 (clan genealogy). So why does this book simply refer to “genealogy”?

Let’s begin by answering the first question: what is genealogy, or what is the definition of genealogy? One must consider that ancient and modern scholars have had different opinions on the answer to this question. Below are some such responses, which have been compiled in chronological order.

Song Dynasty writer Su Xun 苏洵: “The Su clan genealogy is the lineage of the Su clan.”—*Su Shi Zu Pu Yin* 苏氏族谱引 (The Preface of the Su Clan Genealogy).

Ming Dynasty writer Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺: “Genealogy can be a general record of ancestors near and far, their names, taboo names and reign titles. Genealogy can also be lists of ancestors near and far, and lists of rituals dating back hundreds of generations. A sequence of names is called a pedigree; a record of marriages and officialdom is called a book. The epoch of emperors, the history of vassals and the biography of intellectuals together form genealogies. Genealogies can be renewed by adding future generations. They contain the origin of a surname, records of generations near and far, and show male descendants in patrilineal sequence dating down from their founding ancestors. Zheng Xuan said: genealogy is like a family’s general plan, when the plan is laid out, the details are easy to arrange.”¹—*Zu Pu Xu* 族谱序 (Preface of Clan Genealogy).

Ming Dynasty writer Huang Rubing 黄儒炳: “A country has a history and a family has a genealogy. Genealogy is a kind of history. According to common practice, a state historian must know the meaning of *Chun Qiu* 春秋 (the Spring and Autumn Annals), to understand the leadership and how the state system has adjusted. A

¹ *Xun Zhi Zhai Ji* 逊志斋集 (Xunzhi Studio Collection), Vol. 13.

genealogist should also know the meaning of *Chun Qiu* to understand the kinds of human relations defined by moral codes, and how customs have adjusted.”²—*Fang Qian Lin Shi Jia Pu Xu* 方前林氏家谱序 (Preface to Fangqian’s Lin Family Genealogy).

Qing Dynasty writer Zhang Xuecheng 章学诚: “There is history to the world, history to a country, history to a family, and history to a person. The history of a person can tell us someone’s status and aspirations; the history of a family can be discovered through family records and archives; the history of a country can be discovered through the gazetteers of cities and counties; together these all collectively form the history of the world.”³

During the second year of Xuantong reign (1910), the writer of the *Cheng Family Lineage in Renli, Jixi* 绩溪仁里程世禄堂世系谱 wrote: “A family has a genealogy just as a country has a history. History details incidents of praise and blame, while a genealogy records the origin and flow of a family. Therefore, it is necessary to elaborate on the sequence of generations, and to show the adjusted behavior of family members, so that future generations can trace back their roots.”

Ci Hai 辞海—Encyclopedic Dictionary of Mandarin Chinese (1979 edition): “an old genealogical book that records the generations of families and the achievements of prominent figures.”

Ci Yuan 辞源—Etymological Dictionary of Chinese Characters (1986 edition): “a feudal age book that records family lineage and achievements.”⁴

Liu Guanwen 刘贯文: “A genealogy is a specially formed history book that records the development of a clan.”—*The Task of Genealogy Research* 谱牒学研究的任务.

Yang Dongquan 杨冬荃: “A genealogy or lineage enumerates all of the characters from one consanguineous group. It can also be said that—as long as the descendants of the same ancestor are listed one by one—it constitutes a simple family tree.”⁵—*Study on the Origin of Chinese Genealogy* 中国家谱起源研究.

Ouyang Zongshu 欧阳宗书, summarizing the definitions of genealogy by ancient and modern scholars: “A genealogy is a book that mainly records the lineage and deeds of clan characters in ancient Chinese patriarchal society, and its family development history is recorded in a special form.”⁶—*Chinese Genealogy* 中国家谱.

² *Shi Zu Dian* 氏族典 (Histories of clans): Lin Xing Bu (Surname Lin 林). In *the Gu Jin Tu Shu Ji Cheng* 古今图书集成 (The Compendium of ancient and contemporary books).

³ *Wen Shi Tong Yi Jiao Zhu* 文史通义校注 (Collating and annotating all-embracing delineations of literature and history), Essay 1, Vol. 6. Request for the establishment of department annals in cities and counties. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985.

⁴ *Ci Yuan* 辞源. Beijing: Commercial Press, 1986.

⁵ *Genealogical research* 谱牒学研究. Beijing: Bibliography and Documents Publishing House, 1989 (1).

⁶ *Chinese family genealogy* 中国家谱. Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 1992: 4.

Pan Shiren 潘世仁: “A genealogy is a record that reflects the important political, economic and cultural activities of a family and its development.”⁷—*Genealogy: Rich Historical Records* 家谱——内涵丰富的史籍。

In my November 11, 1997 article *Developing Genealogical Resources to Carry Forward History and Culture* 开发谱牒资源, 弘扬历史文化 published in *Wenhui Daily*, I put forward that genealogy “is the historical records of a consanguineous clan’s lineage and achievements.”

Modern Chinese Dictionary 现代汉语大辞典 (1997 edition): “a book in which feudal families recorded the lineage and achievements of their prominent figures.”

Yang Dongquan, during a 1998 seminar on Chinese genealogy at the Shanghai Library: “a genealogy is a systematic list of characters’ lineage and other records, belonging to a certain consanguineous group with common ancestors.”⁸—*New Definition of Genealogy* 家谱定义新说。

Dictionary of Chinese History 中国历史大辞典 (2000 edition): “a general record in the past of a family’s line and the achievements of its prominent figures.”

Wanyan Shaoyuan 完颜绍元: “a book that records the blood ties of family members.”⁹—*Culture of Chinese Names* 中国姓名文化。

Xu Jianhua 徐建华: “Family genealogy is written in tabular form and in a special book format, and records the family lineage and deeds of important figures.”¹⁰—*Chinese Family Genealogy* 中国的家谱。

Liu Liming 刘黎明: “so-called ‘genealogy’ is a pedigree chart of a family or a clan.”¹¹—*Ancestral Temples, Spirit Tablets and Genealogies* 祠堂 灵牌 家谱。

Modern Chinese Dictionary 现代汉语辞典 (fifth, 2005 edition): “a book that records family lineage and the achievements of its prominent figures.”

The above definitions of genealogy have no fundamental differences, except the 1980s Chinese Etymology definition, which is slightly biased. All of these writers hold that genealogy is a record of lineage structure, figures from the same consanguineous group, and their achievements. To expound it from different angles: some in a narrow sense think that genealogy is just a record of family lineage; others in a broad sense think that, with the development of society, genealogical records have been expanded to include family stories and the deeds of specific figures. Some focused on the attributes of genealogy thinking that it is a family history, while others emphasize it is a written record in book form. Others are broad in their definitions to include non-written genealogy.

However, which definition is the more scientific and all-encompassing?

⁷ *Genealogical research*. Beijing: Bibliography and Documents Publishing House, 1989 (4).

⁸ Yang Dongquan 杨冬荃. *New definitions of genealogy* 家谱定义新说. *Chinese genealogy research* 中国谱牒研究. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1999: 40.

⁹ *Culture of Chinese names* 中国姓名文化. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2001: 37.

¹⁰ *Chinese family genealogy* 中国的家谱. Tianjin: Baihua Literature and Art Publishing House, 2002: 1.

¹¹ Liu Liming 刘黎明. *Ancestral temple, spirit tablet and family genealogy* 祠堂·灵牌·家谱. Chengdu: Sichuan People’s Publishing House, 2003: 163.

In order to answer this, we must first understand the definitions of “jiā” 家 (family) and “pǔ” 谱 (genealogy). According to Xu Shen 许慎 in the *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* 说文解字 (An Explication of Written Characters), “jiā” 家 is a pictographic character because “宀” looks like the roof of a house for people to live in. They raise “豕” 豕 (pigs). These were an early symbol of an agro-pastoral economy, where there was collective pig raising and changes to private pig raising. The “people” within the family character are defined as a couple or a family living in a room together. Therefore, “jiā” can be defined as an organization of parents and children working and living together, based on the matrimonial relationship between men and women—the most basic consanguineous group.

Historians have various explanations for “pǔ” 谱. The *Shuo Wen Jie Zi Gu Lin* 说文解字诂林 (a compilation of all previous commentaries to the *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*) says: “It is a [book] record.” The *Shi Ming* 释名 (Explanation of Names) says: “It is a list of events.” *The Shi Ji Zheng Yi: San Dai Shi Biao* 史记正义·三代世表 (Annotations on Historical Records: Three Generations’ Charts) says, similarly: “It is a list of affairs.” That is to say, it is the arrangement of similar things for direct observation. The *Wen Xin Diao Long: Shu Ji* 文心雕龙·书记 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: Letters and Notices) says: “For the general registration of common people, there are records and books... they must be universal, so successive generations are arranged in order and things are well documented.” That is to say, it describes the importance of detailed and comprehensive records.¹² Later genealogists have had their own understandings of it.

From the above definitions/analyses of “jiā” and “pǔ”, we can see that “jiā” refers to a certain consanguineous group and “pǔ” refers to the comprehensive and systematic arrangement of similar things. Therefore, when “jiā” and “pǔ” are combined, this means: “a description of the carrier of blood lineage”. Although genealogy has various names, multifarious content, manifold definitions, and myriad types, the briefest, most basic description of genealogy should be: “a description of the carrier of blood lineage”. Two things are important to note in this definition: it must refer to blood lineage, in a narrow sense because of the consanguinity of a family, in a broad sense because of clans, multiple kinship families and large clans which have multiple branches from a progenitor. Secondly, there must be a pedigree. It can be simple and only detail several generations, such as the pedigree of grandfathers, fathers, sons, grandsons, etc. The pedigree can also be the generations that have descended from one progenitor, or the various branches that have been descended from one progenitor.

It is more accurate to define genealogy as “a description of the carrier of blood lineage”. This definition encompasses “recording” and “narrating”, which are two aspects of genealogy. “Recording” mainly refers to written genealogy, while “narrating” mainly refers to oral genealogy. The aforementioned definition is all-encompassing to include the genealogy of a family and a clan, as well as hundreds of families and clans. It not only refers to book-type genealogy, but other types such

¹² Yang Dongquan. *New definitions of genealogy. Chinese genealogy research*. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1999: 37.

as stone-tablet genealogy, and cloth genealogy. It includes non-written genealogies, such as knotted rope genealogy. It also includes mature and complete genealogies after the Song Dynasty, as well as the most primitive genealogies, such as oracle and bronze genealogies. At the same time, this definition excludes family history records that do not systematically record lineage, biographies, histories, etc. Although these family records describe the historical events of a family, they cannot be called a genealogy because they are not a complete list of family lineage. This is the core of genealogy and the only criterion to distinguish whether something is a genealogy or not.

Now that we have answered what “genealogy” is, we will approach the second question. There are many book titles which reflect genealogy, among which, the “jiapu”, “zongpu”, and “zupu” are common. This book looks at the “jiapu” alone as a representative summary of all genealogical books, for the following reasons:

First, since the Tang Dynasty, genealogy has come to be the most popular subject in genealogical books. There has been a developmental process in the names of genealogical books produced during the earlier Chinese dynasties. In the *Zhou Li Shu* 周礼疏 (Annotations on the Rites of Zhou), Kong Yingda 孔颖达 called the imperial genealogies *Di Xi* 帝系 and vassal genealogies *Shi Ben* 世本. In the *Han Shu: Yi Wen Zhi* 汉书 艺文志 (The Official Dynastic History of the Han Dynasty: Monograph on Literature), the imperial and vassal genealogies were called *Di Wang Zhu Hou Shi Pu* 帝王诸侯世谱 (Pedigree Charts of the Imperial Family). During the Southern and Northern Dynasties, Pei Songzhi’s 裴松之 (372–451) *San Guo Zhi Zhu* 三国志注 (Annotations on the Records of Three Kingdoms) and Liu Xiaobiao’s 刘孝标 (463–521) *Shi Shuo Xin Yu Zhu* 世说新语注 (Annotations on the New Tales of the World) named genealogical books after a certain surname. But at this time, genealogical books also had other names, such as *Yangxiong’s Family Genealogy* 杨雄家牒 cited by *Wen Xuan Zhu* 文选注 (Annotating selections of refined literature); *The Zhi Family Lineage* 赞氏世本 cited by *Shi Shuo Xin Yu Zhu*; the *Yang Family Blood Lineage* 杨氏血脉谱, and the *Yang Family Branch Lineage* 杨氏枝分谱 recorded in the *Sui Zhi* 隋志 (Annals of the Sui Dynasty). The *Shi Shuo Xin Yu Zhu* also cited the *Wang Family Genealogy* 王氏家谱, the first book to use the word “genealogy” in its title. The *Xin Tang Shu: Yi Wen Zhi* 新唐书 艺文志 (The New Official Dynastic History of the Tang Dynasty: Monograph on Literature) contained genealogical books with various names, such as the “jiapu” 家谱, “bielu” 别录: special recording, “biaopu” 表谱: tabular book, “shipu” 氏谱: genealogy, “zupu” 族谱, “shijia” 世家: family document, “jiadie” 家牒: family genealogy, and “jiashi” 家史: family history. Among these books, “jiapu” was used 21 times, far more than any other name,¹³ indicating that the phrase was popular during the Tang Dynasty. Although genealogical books in the Tang and later dynasties had other names, the “jiapu” became the most common name in later years.

Secondly, because genealogy reflects the lineage and achievements of a clan, “jiapu” can best summarize all kinds of genealogical books. As mentioned above, genealogical books mostly use the terms “jiapu”, “zongpu”, or “zupu”. “Jia”

¹³ *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐书 (The New Official Dynastic History of the Tang Dynasty), Vol. 58.

家(family), “zong”宗 (patrilineality), and “zu”族 (clan) all refer to social organizations where people have the same blood line, but their range and scope is different. “Jia” is the most core/basic relationship, and refers to marriage and kinship-based social units. “Jia” includes parents, children, and other relatives that live together. “Zong” is much larger, and includes descendants in linked patrilineal sequence, descended from a group’s founding ancestors. “Zu” is the largest, and is a general term for relatives who are related by blood. Therefore, although family genealogy, patrilineality genealogy, and clan genealogy all record the lineage and deeds of a consanguineous group, “genealogy” is a basic principle at its core, so it is more appropriate and natural that it represents/summarizes genealogical books. If we thumb through the 1999 book *Ci Hai*, we find a special entry on “jiapu”: “an ancient genealogical book that records the generations of a family and the achievements of its prominent figures—also known as the ‘zongpu’, ‘zupu’ and ‘jiasheng’: family record’.” The *Ci Hai* has no entry on “zongpu”, and it only briefly describes “zupu” as “the pedigree of a clan”. Therefore, it can be seen that the *Ci Hai* uses “jiapu” alone to summarize all genealogical books. The same is true of the *Dictionary of Chinese History* (2000 edition), which has an identical entry on “jiapu” to that of the *Ci Hai*. The *Dictionary of Chinese History* has no entry on “zongpu” or “zupu”. The *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (2005 edition) has entries on “jiapu” and “zupu”, but not on “zongpu”. It defines “jiapu” as “a book that records a family’s lineage and the achievements of prominent figures”. It defines “zupu” as “a book that records a clan’s lineage and the achievements of prominent figures”. This goes to show why it is more appropriate/representative to summarize all genealogical books under the term “jiapu”.

To conclude, it is best to summarize all genealogical books as “jiapu”. As mentioned above, out of all of the terms that refer to social organizations where members have shared blood ties, the term “jia” 家 (family) is the most basic. Families are the basic cells of human society, and the core social unit in a bloodline relationship includes parents, children, and other relatives that live together. A wider genealogy could include one’s great-great-grandfather, great-grandfather, grandfather, father, sons, grandsons, great-grandsons and great-great-grandsons. These are the “nine grades of relationships, or jiuzu” 九族,¹⁴ and the “five degrees of mourning attire or “wufu” 五服¹⁵ are the closest blood relationships. “Zong” and “zu” have an even wider scope, so although the descendants of a patrilineal group or clan come

¹⁴ Translator’s note: The “nine grades of relations” (九族) is an important concept when it comes to application of laws and observing rituals. It refers to nine generations from great-great-grandfather down to great-great-grandchildren.

¹⁵ Translator’s note: The “five degrees of mourning attire” (五服) define not only the proper attire, but also the proper mourning ritual one should observe when a relative has died. Appearing in writings as early as the Rites of Zhou, mourning rituals developed over the years. By the time of the Qing dynasty, it was set down in law that there were five degrees, or grades of mourning according to the relationship one has with the deceased. The closer a person is related to the deceased, the higher the degree of mourning that is observed. Conventionally, clans adopted the five degrees of mourning according to unwritten definitions that determines the difference between close and distant relatives.

from a common ancestor, they are arguably not as close as the “nine kinships” or “five degrees”. Therefore, and without a doubt, members of a consanguineous group feel a stronger family bond than the bond in a patrilineal group or a clan. This leads people to naturally think that family genealogy feels stronger and closer than patriarchy or clan genealogy. Consequently, it makes sense that most of the genealogical books in the past few centuries have been called “genealogies”. Some titles include:

- Pan Guangdan. 1929. A Brief History of Chinese Genealogy. *Eastern Miscellany*, 26 (1).
- Yang Dianxun. 1944. The General Theory of Chinese Genealogy. *Quarterly Bulletin of Chinese Bibliography*, New Vol. 3 (1–2).
- Wu Xinli. 1988. China’s Genealogies and Their Academic Value. *Historical Studies*, 6.
- Yang Dongquan. 1989. Study on the Origin of Chinese Genealogy. In *Genealogical Research*, 1. Bibliography and Document Publishing House.
- Ouyang Zongshu. 1992. *Chinese Genealogy*. Xinhua Publishing House.
- Ge Jianxiong. 1997. Family Genealogy: Its Values and Limitations as Historical Document. *Issues in History Teaching*, 6.
- Xu Jianhua. 2002. *China’s Genealogies*. Baihua Literature and Art Publishing House.
- Liu Liming. 2003. *Ancestral Temple, Spirit Tablet and Family Genealogy*. Sichuan People’s Publishing House.

Some of the above works are of great importance. I think there are two reasons why the authors discuss their genealogical books under the term “jiapu”: firstly, it better summarizes of all genealogical books and secondly, using genealogy to discuss genealogical books makes people feel closer.

1.2 Types of Genealogy

China’s genealogies are numerous and diverse. Considering that the vast majority of existing genealogies are book genealogies, we can divide genealogies into two categories: book genealogy and non-book genealogy.

The first genealogy to consider is book genealogy, which is written or printed on paper and then bound into books. Today’s existing genealogies are mainly book ones, with more than 99% being book genealogies so to speak. Many of these books are kept in private collections, but most are stored in public institutions of different sizes in China and abroad, mainly in libraries. Among them, the Shanghai Library has the largest collection of family genealogies.

Since the establishment of the Shanghai Library in July 1952, all the leaders have attached great importance to the research work of collecting, purchasing, sorting, and developing genealogical documents. According to statistics, the Shanghai Library has collected over 21,000 collections of genealogies with nearly 200,000 copies.

This accounts for more than one third of the world's genealogies, so it is called "Half of China's Genealogies".

When entering the stack room of genealogies in the Shanghai Library, we can see colorful, a wide variety, and beautiful genealogies categorized under different names, such as "jiapu", "zongpu", "zupu", "gongfang pu" 公房谱: public genealogy, "hepu" 合谱: combined genealogy, "fangpu" 房谱: branch genealogy, "zhipu" 支谱: branch genealogy, "tongpu" 通谱: general genealogy, "tongpu" 统谱: general genealogy, "fenpu" 坟谱: cemetery genealogy, "cipu" 祠谱: ancestral temple genealogy, "jiashi" 家史, "jiazhi" 家志: family history, "jiadian" 家典: family rituals, "jiasheng" 家乘, "jibu" 祭簿: offering book, "jiadie" 家牒, "zongbu" 宗簿: clan book, "zongzhi" 宗志: clan history, "shijia" 世家, "shixi" 世系: family pedigree, "shilu" 世录: generation chart, "shipu" 世谱: family history, "hanggpu" 行谱: generational genealogy, "shidie" 世牒: family pedigree, "putu" 谱图: genealogy illustration, "rending ce" 人丁册: generation name chart, "yudie" 玉牒: imperial genealogy, "dixi" 帝系, "zupu" 祖谱: ancestor genealogy, "xuemaipu" 血脉谱: bloodline genealogy, "lianrong pu" 联宗谱: joint genealogy, "huiyu" 会谱: general genealogy, "zongpu" 总谱: general genealogy, "yuanliu" 源流: origin and flow, "yuanyuan lu" 渊源录: record of origin, "xiande zhuan" 先德传: virtuous ancestors, "qingfen lu" 清芬录: record of virtuous ancestors.

These numerous and spectacular genealogies can be classified.

In terms of content, genealogies can be divided into:

- (1) Family genealogy and clan genealogy. It records the lineage, characters, and deeds of a family or clan, which accounts for the overwhelming majority of family genealogies.
- (2) Imperial genealogy. It records the lineage, characters, and deeds of imperial families, such as the *Imperial Family Genealogy of King Duoluoxunqin or the 14th Son of Saint Emperor Zuren* 圣祖仁皇帝十四子多罗恂勤王玉牒. This records the family line of Yunti 允禔, the 14th son (also known as the 14th brother) of emperor Kangxi of Qing Dynasty, and is stored at the Shanghai Library.
- (3) Ancestral temple genealogy. It records the building, maintenance, function, contract, and management of clan ancestral temples and is composed of two parts: picture and text. An example of this is the *Renovation of the Main Ancestral Temple by Fu Family in Dongshan, Jinhua, Zhejiang* 浙江金华东山傅氏修葺大宗祠 in the 38th year of the Reign of Qianlong of Qing Dynasty (1773), where the details of Fu's 傅 renovation of the ancestral temple are recorded, and is kept at the Shanghai Library.
- (4) Cemetery genealogy. This records the position, orientation, renovation, sacrifice activities, and other aspects of cemeteries of family ancestors which also consists of two parts: picture and text.
- (5) Joint genealogy. Generally, family genealogy only relates to one surname, but there are also some related to two or more surnames. Joint family genealogies, such as *Genealogies of the Xiao Family and the Jiang Family in Wuyuan, Jiangxi*

萧江家乘 can be found in the 30th year of the Reign of Emperor Daoguang of Qing Dynasty (1850), which contains the two surnames: Xiao 萧 and Jiang 江.

In terms of coverage, genealogies can be divided into:

- (1) Family genealogy, patrilineality genealogy, and clan genealogy, which record the lineage, characters, and deeds of a family or a clan.
- (2) Branch genealogy. As a family or a clan multiplies, it is often divided into several branches. The genealogy compiled by the branches is called branch genealogy, whose range is smaller than that of the parent family or clan.
- (3) General genealogy. As known by its name, it is a family genealogy of the same surname in various regions, covering a wide range. For example, the Shanghai Library collects *General Genealogy of Wang Families* 王氏通谱 in 20th year of the Reign of Emperor Guangxu of Qing Dynasty (1894), which is a comprehensive grand genealogy including Wang families in Taiyuan 太原, Langya 琅琊, Sanhuai 三槐, and other regions. It is rich in content on a larger scale as it has 82 volumes in total.

In terms of version, genealogies can be divided into:

- (1) Ancient genealogy. It mainly refers to thread-bound genealogical books printed on Xuan paper and published before 1949, with vertical characters and right-turning pages.
- (2) Paperback genealogy. It mainly refers to new genealogical books published after 1949, with lead-print horizontal characters and left-turning pages.

Since the division of 1949 is recent, it is only relative. Some new genealogical books are printed in the style of ancient books and look very archaic.

The above classifications in terms of content, coverage and version are only rough divisions; if looked at further, subdivisions can be made by last surname, region, date, print form, etc., but we will not go further here. In short, book genealogies are numerous and varied.

The second is the non-book genealogy. In addition to book genealogy, there are some non-book genealogies. Although there may not be many, there are different varieties that are quite distinctive and some have important historical value. They mainly include:

- (1) Oral genealogy: genealogies that have been passed down from generation to generation by oral transmission and reflect a family's lineage. In ancient Chinese classics, the family lineage of the era before the emergence of writing was recorded. For instance, The *Shan Hai Jing* 山海经 (The Classic of Mountains and Seas) recorded the family lineage of Yan Di 炎帝 (or Huang Di in various texts, surnamed Jiang 姜 and nicknamed "Shennongshi" 神农氏) and Di Jun's 帝俊 family lineage. These genealogies were passed down from generation to generation by oral transmission; that is, they were oral genealogies that were later written down. These oral genealogies of Shennongshi and Di Jun are interlinked by name; in other words, the last syllable or the last two/three syllables of each descendant's name has been placed before

the name of the subsequent descendant. For example, the family lineage of Shengnongshi is as follows: “Yan Ju bore Jie Bing 节并; Jie Bing gave birth to Xi Qi 戏器; and Xi Qi bore Zhu Rong 祝融”, such a link facilitates memorization, recitation, and circulation. The custom of our primitive ancestors orally transmitting genealogies has been well preserved among some ethnic minority groups. Before the written language came into being, the Mongolians had a custom of “telling family lineage and deeds with their mouths.” The custom of transmitting genealogies orally has been passed down and well preserved into the present in some minority groups. since the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949, Chinese researchers have conducted ethnic surveys, and they have found evidence of oral genealogies that have been passed down from generation to generation in some ethnic groups that did not have their own languages. For example, the Nu ethnic group in Bijiang county of Yunnan practiced linked oral genealogy, so some senior people can recite the names of more than forty generations of ancestors. Linked name genealogy that has been transmitted orally to this day includes both patrilineal and matrilineal oral genealogies. Oral genealogy has the two basic elements of blood lineage and pedigree. It is the most primitive form of Chinese genealogy and also the oldest.

- (2) Knotted rope genealogy: genealogical information was recorded by tying knots on ropes. Before the writing came into being, China had experienced the era of tying ropes to remember events, using ropes to tie knots to help people remember things. “The ancient [Chinese] used ropes to rule and the later sages shifted to use deed.”¹⁶ “The ancient people had no words, so when things needed to be sworn, they would use rope to tie a big knot for a big thing and a small knot for a small thing, and the amount of knots depends on an amount of different things. Using rope as a reference is enough to govern each other.”¹⁷ In ancient times, people not only used rope to record their lives, but also tied knots to keep counts of their generations and family lineage, which is why it is called primitive knotted rope genealogy. The Oroqen people in northeast China have the custom of tying knots to remember things. As late as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they used horsehair ropes to tie knots to show how many generations there are in a family: three knots mean three generations and five knots mean five generations. The Xibe people in northeast China have a silk rope about two feet long, which is their knotted rope genealogy. A few dorsal bones on the rope indicate how many generations the tribe has gone through; a few bows and arrows indicate how many men there are in this family; a few red cloths indicate how many women there are in this family. They venerated this silk rope and hung it in the middle of the wooden beam of their house. Such horsehair ropes and silk ropes were their family genealogies.

¹⁶ Zhou Yi: *Xi Ci*, Vol. 2 周易·系辞下传 (Books of Changes). Published by Imperial Academy in the 13th year of the reign of Tongzhi (1875).

¹⁷ (Tang) Li Dingzuo 李鼎祚. *Jiu Jia Yi* 九家易 cited by Zhou Yi Ji Jie 周易集解 (Annotations on Book of Changes). Published in the 36th year of the reign of Jiajing (1812).

Like oral genealogy, knotted rope genealogy already contains two elements of blood lineage and pedigree, and is also the most primitive form of Chinese genealogy. Different from oral genealogy, knotted rope genealogy is the most primitive physical genealogy in China.

- (3) Oracle inscription genealogy: genealogy engraved on tortoise shells and animal bones. Before writing was created, people relied on oral transmission and rope knots to remember their family lineage, but over time it was inevitable to make mistakes. After writing came into being, people began to write things down on oracle bones. The bones recorded family lineage or the genealogy on tortoise shell and animal bones, and was considered oracle genealogy. According to researchers, at least three fragments of oracle bones can be identified as the oldest family genealogy. One of them is now in the British Museum, which records the names of 14 people from 11 generations of Er 兀 family during Wuding period (1250–1192 BC) and it is a very complete oracle genealogy of noble family lineage. Oracle inscription genealogy is the most primitive and the oldest written physical genealogy.
- (4) Bronze genealogy: genealogy inscribed on bronze vessels. Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin, with its main ingredient as copper, but a certain proportion of tin is added to make a cast vessel look bluish-gray, so it is called bronze. In the existing Shang Dynasty bronze vessels, there are four belonging to bronze genealogies, which are enshrined in an ancestral temple to worship ancestors and record lineage as well as to make descendants never forget their ancestors and add sacrifices of time, so that ancestors' lineage can be eternal with vessels. Just like oracle genealogy, bronze genealogy records family lineage by writing and becomes the oldest physical genealogy by writing in Chinese history.
- (5) Stone tablet genealogy: genealogy inscribed on a stone tablet. The reason why family genealogies were engraved on stone tablets was very clear: "engraving on stone meant it can be handed down forever". In the Han Dynasty (206BC–220AD), this kind of genealogy was very popular. *Sanlao Stone Genealogy* 三老碑 in the 28th year of the reign of Jianwu in the eastern Han Dynasty (52) and *Sun Shuao Stone Genealogy* 孙叔敖碑 in the 3rd Yanxi year of the reign of emperor Huan of Han Dynasty (160) are famous families of the Han Dynasty. Compared to oracle inscription genealogy and bronze genealogy, stone genealogy is more mature and richer in content. In addition to the record of family members' lineage, names, dates of death, the above two stone genealogies also record achievements and virtues of ancestors, the purpose of the monument, and other content. They arrange names and seniorities so: the vertical is father and son, the horizontal is husband and wife, brother and sister. Such genealogy has obvious relationship with that of later generations. Stone genealogy has remained for a long time, so when paper genealogy was born, there were still some families chose to "carve in stone" while compiling paper genealogies. For example, Su Xun, a famous literary writer in the Song Dynasty, while hosting the compilation of *The Su Clan Genealogy*, built a pavilion to the southwest of his great-great-grandfather's cemetery and inscribed his family genealogy on a stone tablet in it. The practice of carving

genealogy in stone tablet lasted until the creation of the Republic of China. For example, in Xianghao village, Liuzhai township, Nandan county of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, the *Mo Family Shaomu Clan Genealogy* 莫姓哨目族谱 carved in Republic of China was found, which recorded the origin, lineage, pedigree, and generation name chart of Mo family, and its full text has 412 characters.¹⁸ Compared with previous genealogies, the content of stone genealogy is richer and more comprehensive. The popularity of stone genealogy in the Han Dynasty continued to the Republic of China, indicating that the history of stone genealogy is as long as 2000 years.

- (6) Pagoda genealogy: as the name implies, it refers to genealogy engraved on pagodas, generally on its stone body. So it is, in a sense, an extension of stone genealogy. Cuijiaping, Linxian county of Shanxi Province preserves a complete pagoda genealogy carved in the Ming Dynasty, which is very symbolic. According to its inscriptions, the pagoda was first built in the 16th year of the reign of Jiajing (1537) and rebuilt in the 16th year of the reign of Jiajing(1547), with “a diameter of more than 5.5 feet, a surrounding area of about 16.4 feet, and also includes seven floors about 26.2 feet high”.¹⁹ Its seven floors consisted of finely carved six-sided gravels, bluestone blocks, and gravel eaves; flowers are carved on gravels, letters are engraved on bluestones, and the Cui family genealogy and those of other surnames are engraved on the bluestone blocks of the first and second floors. Cuijiaping pagoda genealogy obviously has the following characteristics: one is the coexistence of Buddha and genealogy on pagoda lets people worship Buddha and ancestors at the same time, which is a development and supplement to “respect ancestors, worship patriarchy and unite clans”. For instance, the purpose of family genealogy in Song and Yuan Dynasties and the “three cardinal guides and five constant virtues”, aims the family genealogy of the Ming Dynasty, so it has a unique and profound meaning; the second is the coexistence of multiple genealogies. It not only contains six Cui family genealogies that have formed a general genealogy of Cui families, but also genealogies of a dozen other surnames, which gather on a pagoda to form a large genealogy group, which is extremely rare in the history of Chinese genealogy, so it has a high value as historical data as a precious physical data.
- (7) Cloth genealogy: family genealogy written on cloth. On March 10, 2006, Anhui Business Daily published a report entitled *Family Genealogy Written on Cloth* 写在布上的家谱, which said, on the morning of March 9, 2006, villagers of Pei village, Huanglu town, Jucao district, Chaohu city of Anhui province displayed a huge genealogy written on cloth, which was 276 cm long and 166 cm wide, recording the lineage of the Pei family for over 700 years and

¹⁸ Ouyang Zongshu 欧阳宗书. *Chinese family genealogy* 中国家谱. Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 1992: 15.

¹⁹ Li Ronghai 李荣海. On pagoda genealogy carved during the reign of Jiajing in Cuijiaping, Linxian county of Shanxi province 浅谈山西临县崔家坪嘉靖石塔家谱. *Genealogical research*. Beijing: Bibliography and Document Publishing House, 1992.

19 generations, with clear and neat writing and painted decorative pattern. It has been preserved for nearly 100 years on a piece of textile, so it is known as cloth genealogy. Not only Anhui has cloth genealogy, but also Maochen township, Xiaogan city of Hubei province, and other places have many. In the northern countryside, it is also known as “cloud” or the “sacred scroll”. The cloth genealogy in Chaohu city of Anhui province is a rare and large piece. Generally, cloth genealogy only has a simple pedigree chart, because at that time some families did not have the strength to compile a complete genealogy, so they just used a piece of white cloth to write down the names of the male ancestors of the past generations as a family genealogy. It is stored at ordinary times and only put up in the middle hall for worship at festivals. After the festival, it will be stored again.

- (8) Sacred scroll genealogy: refers to the pedigree chart written on a long scroll, which is like a picture on a piece of paper and it can usually be rolled up into a scroll. As it contains the names and images of ancestors, it is called sacred scroll genealogy. It has something in common with cloth genealogy in that it mainly records the names of the ancestors of past dynasties and there are images in between. It is rolled up and stored during ordinary times and opened to be hung up for worship at festivals. Beijing Zhongtao Ancient Art Appraisal Technology Development Center identified in July 2004 an Anhui collector's *Sacred Scroll Genealogy of the Ye Family in Jinhua of Zhejiang* 浙江金华叶氏家谱书画卷, a sacred scroll genealogy that is of important literature and art value. This long scroll is a genealogy in the Song and Yuan Dynasties. It is 32 cm high, 480 cm long and made up of five sections. The preface section is a seal script calligraphy by Zhang Xiaoxiang, a zhuangyuan (the title given to the scholar who achieved the highest score on highest level of the Chinese imperial examinations) in the Southern Song Dynasty. It says: “May next generations have consistent luck in getting promotions as an official, and lead a clean and frugal life”. The first section is *An Imperial Edict to Yeheng, the Judge of Dali Temple* issued by emperor Gaozong of the Song Dynasty and dated “the afternoon of June 7 in Shaoxing in the 30th Year of the Reign of Emperor Gaozong”. The second section is a half portrait of Yeheng by an anonymous hand. The third section is an inscription for Ye Family's scroll, which is a poem with seven characters to each line written by Fan Zhongyan, a famous writer and politician in the Song Dynasty. The fourth section is *General Genealogy of the Ye Family: Pedigree Chart*, which is the most important content of the long scroll genealogy and is preceded by an epilogue revealing the historical origin of the Ye family in Jinhua of Zhejiang province. Neat lower cases fully recorded 25 generations of the Ye family from the Zhou Dynasty to the Yuan Dynasty by adopting a five-generation pedigree chart. This kind of chart was innovated by Ouyang Xiu and Su Xun. And because of this, the scroll is less than 5 m long, yet it records 25 generations of the Ye family, including the generation name chart, officialdoms in clear writing and lineage. This piece has overcome the shortcomings of some genealogies that have chaotic and confusing rankings of numerous descendants far and near, so it has high cultural relic value.

- (9) Paper genealogy: the pedigree chart written on paper, similar to cloth genealogy written on cloth. Paper genealogy has had a very long history. In the tombs of Sui and Tang Dynasties in Asina, Turpan, and Xinjiang of China, two pieces of paper genealogies were unearthed, one is an incomplete clan genealogy of a surname in Wei, Jin, Northern, and Southern Dynasties, while the other is also an incomplete family genealogy of a surname between the Han Dynasty and the Sixteen States, all written on paper. Later, book genealogy was born, but some families did not have the strength to compile a complete book genealogy, so they wrote the names of the family ancestors on paper similar to a book genealogy, which was stored at ordinary times and taken out for worship at festivals, and even continued to fill in the names of the nearest family members. *The Duuren-Güyeng Genealogy* 图林固英雄谱 in the Mongolian Autonomous County of Kharchin, Liaoning Province is a very distinctive Mongolian genealogy. It records the clan of the last emperor's son-in-law, Duuren-Güyeng. It was written from top to bottom by hand in Mongolian, and is eight meters long and 1.7 m wide. It was usually rolled up while in storage, but opened during days of worship or holidays. It records the names and social status of the descendants of Duuren-Güyeng, from the ninth year of the Huangtaiji era (1635) to the first year of the Xuanton era (1909). Altogether, it lists 14 generations of descendants. 1904 people are recognized in total in this genealogy, and 1153 were granted various official titles by the Qing Imperial Court. There were 22 first-class tabunans, three second-class tabunans, 43 third-class tabunans, 1019 fourth-class tabunans, 13 jasays, one infanta, 63 beidis, two beizis, four zhenguo dukes, 22 associate ministers, four zusuotumeng directors, one interior minister, eight ministers of justice, and eight emperor's minions. 386 people were granted non-titles, and there were 365 lamas. This genealogy records nearly 300 years of Mongolian history, and traces the Mongolians back some 1000 years. It fills in some of the blanks previously left in the Mongol Dynasty history after Emperor Yuanshun's reign. It therefore has high value as a cultural relic.²⁰
- (10) No-word genealogy: a physical genealogy without written records and it is a very unique kind of genealogy. Areas inhabited by Miao people, such as Xiaomaopoying village and Miaozhai village, Xuanen county, Enshi Tujia, and Miao autonomous prefecture of Hubei province and Hangzhai village, Huayuan county, Xiangxi Tujia, and Miao autonomous prefecture of Hunan province preserve no-word genealogies. Miao people here keep this cultural custom: a piece of refined green or black cloth without words is sealed in a small bamboo tube. Miao people call it "biao, 表 (table)" and hold a grand ceremony of "entering table" and "leaving table" every time a person is born or dies. When a baby is born, they take out "table" and veer it twice, meaning "entering table". When a family member dies, they take out "table" and reverse

²⁰ Zhang Wenguang 张文广. Historic clan genealogy is national treasure: the Duuren-Güyeng genealogy in the Mongolian Autonomous County of Kharchin 悠悠族谱, 民族瑰宝——喀左蒙古图林固英雄谱. *Liaoning Today*, 2003 (6).

it twice, meaning “leaving table”. “Table” is the most confidential item in the Miao family. The ceremony of “entering and leaving tables” shows that Miao people want to keep the blood relationships important to the family, but do not want to leave any written evidence. Within the clan, each person keeps their own pedigree in mind and knows themselves have entered “table” or genealogy. However, outside the clan, no one knows anything about it. This token, called as “table” by Miao people, serves as a family genealogy. This refined cloth called as “table” is actually a “no-word genealogy”.²¹ In the traditional culture and customs of Miao people, the preservation of no-word genealogy is closely related to its tragic history. Miao ethnic group is an ancient nationality, but also a calamitous and constant migrating one. Throughout history, the successive dynasties have been brutally repressed and suppressed Miao people. In constant war and displacement, it is very dangerous to write down their family tree in detail. In order to preserve their own nationality, Miao people had to adopt the form of “no-word genealogy” and turned its genealogy inherited from generations into an internal firm belief, only held by “entering table” and “leaving table” as a simple ceremony to serve the function of compiling genealogy and inheriting family lineage. It not only prevents nationality blood from being interrupted and confused, but also covers up its original appearance and keeps confidential to the outside world. That Miao people chose anonymity to protect themselves in “no-word genealogy” is a vivid reflection of the tragic history of Miao people, and at the same time, it has added a rather distinctive new species to Chinese genealogy.

- (11) CD and film genealogy: it is to use modern science and technology to record book genealogy onto CDs and microfilms. It is actually an extension of book genealogy, but it's hard to fit into the category of book genealogy as far as its carrier type is concerned. When a book genealogy is recorded into CD and microfilm, its volume is greatly reduced. It has great advantages: firstly, it is convenient for preservation and collection. The small size of CD and film genealogy makes it very easy to keep and collect, and also very easy to carry and mail; secondly, turning book genealogy into optical disk and microfilm is conducive to the protection of ancient books. Currently, the existing book genealogies are mainly ancient ones printed in Ming and Qing Dynasties and the Republic of China and about 60–70 % are the only existing ones, especially those printed before Ming and Qing Dynasties, of which all are precious cultural relics. These ancient book genealogies collected in public units, are substantially and repeatedly provided for readers to read and even copy, are bound to suffer irreparable losses. If they are turned into CD and microfilm and then provided to readers, it will greatly benefit the precious books with protection and the genealogical documents will extend their lifespan; thirdly, it is convenient for readers to read, and even to check online. Readers can use their computers to access CD and film genealogy, and it is very convenient to

²¹ Zhou Xingmao 周兴茂. No-word genealogy of the Miao nationality in Hubei Province 湖北苗族的无字家谱. *Journal of Guizhou Nationalities University*, 2004 (6).

copy if needed. If CD and film genealogies go on online, readers from thousands of miles away can also access the Internet to check it, which is far beyond the reach of book genealogy. Of course, it should be noted that CD and film genealogy has a relatively short lifespan, reportedly no more than 100 years, but with the development of science and technology, this kind of defect can be quickly overcome.

To sum up, Chinese book genealogies are numerous and non-book ones are diversified, both being precious historical and cultural heritages of Chinese nation.

1.3 The History of Genealogy

Based on the definition that genealogy is “a description of the carrier of blood lineage” and the historical analysis of the compiling style, content, function, method and other factors of genealogy which covers 5000 years, the history of genealogy can be roughly divided into seven stages: origin, birth, prosperity, transformation, perfection, popularization, and new compilation.

- (1) The origin stage: from matriarchal society to the Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BC). Since genealogy is “the carrier of describing blood lineage”, its origin must be closely related to the formation of different blood lineages. It is well known that human beings in the early era of group marriages and living lives that conducted sexual incest in a large and confusing scales, so there is no stable blood lineage to follow with certainty. Later, with the prohibition of marriage between parents and children, brothers and sisters, and even all the collateral relatives of the mother, human beings entered clan society based on blood relationship. Descendants of the same ancestor lived together, produced together, shared distribution, shared inheritance of property, shared sacrifice to ancestors, conducted joint revenge of blood clan, and were buried in the same cemetery after death, thus forming a clan group with common blood. The matrilineal clan society based on women appeared first and then gradually developed into patriarchal clan society based on men. Engels pointed out: “The clan is a primitive formation from human society based on blood.”²² Marx said, “The function of clan name is to make clan members to remember the common lineage...Clan name itself is evidence of a common lineage.”²³ Since the original clan society has formed a blood lineage and ranked seniorities by generations, it makes possible the germination of “the carrier of describing blood lineage.” Studies on paleoanthropology, sociology, and archaeology show that Chinese genealogy originated from matriarchal clan society, and its mark is oral genealogy as well as knotted rope genealogy.

²² Marx and Engels. *Complete works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 3. Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 1975: 300.

²³ Marx. *Abstracts of ancient society by Morgan*. Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 1965: 172.

Ancient Chinese classics, such as the *Di Wang Shi Ji*, the *Shan Hai Jing*, and etc., recorded the family lineage before the writing appeared. These genealogies were first handed down through generations of oral transmission, which became oral genealogy, and then written down. These oral genealogies, often linked genealogy, i.e., the last or two or even three syllables of the last generation's name are placed before the name of the next generation, such a link facilitates memorization, recitation and circulation. The customs of oral genealogy of primitive ancestors are well preserved among some minorities. For example, ethnic minorities in Mongolia and southwest China all retain the custom of "telling family lineage and deeds with mouth". China's ethnic minorities, such as Manchus, also retained the method of tying knots to record family members' situation, forming a special knotted rope genealogy. The research of paleoanthropology, sociology and archaeology shows that oral genealogy and knotted rope genealogy began in the late matriarchal society.

In the Shang Dynasty, oracle genealogy carved on tortoise shell and animal bones and bronze genealogy engraved on bronze vessels appeared in China. Both oracle genealogy and bronze genealogy are physical genealogy recorded in writing, a step ahead of oral genealogy and knotted rope genealogy. However, the contents of oracle genealogy and bronze genealogy are simple, which only record the lineage of father, son and brother, so they are not complete family genealogies in the sense of richer content and mature style. Oracle genealogy and bronze genealogy of the Shang Dynasty, come together with oral genealogy and knotted rope genealogy, constitute the oldest and most primitive genealogies in China. In general, they belong to the budding period of Chinese genealogy.

- (2) The birth stage: from the Zhou Dynasty (1046–221 BC) to the Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 220). With the development of clan society, Xia and Shang Dynasties, primitive genealogy gradually broke away from primitive form and reached a new level of development in the Zhou Dynasty, which established patriarchal system based on blood relationship evolved from clan organization and set up inheritance system of the eldest son by the first wife. Under patriarchal system, the eldest son controls ownership of the land, country, and family, plays a dominant role in clan by hosting sacrifices and divinations, has the responsibility of uniting clan, managing clan affairs, guiding armed forces of clan, and enjoys political and exploitative rights to other clan members. From emperors to gentries, all were divided and the distribution of property and power was determined by blood relation, so as to consolidate slavery. Thus it can be seen that patriarchal clan system is also family system, whose core content is that only the eldest son by the first wife can inherit the title of clan and the rank of ancestor, while the other sons can only set up minor clans as collateral branches of the clan or family. Based on the need of such strict hierarchy identity system, family genealogy of "establishing lineage and distinguish seniority" and recording blood relation far and near, legitimacy, concubine, and birth order had a considerable development in the Zhou Dynasty. Not only did each noble family inscribe their family lineage and activities on ritual wares and sacrificial vessel out of the need of respecting ancestral clan, but also various vassal states set

up special officials to be responsible for the compilation and management of family genealogies of all noble families and established a perfect set of system of letting historiographers compile genealogies. The system has created a number of genealogists and the first batch of Chinese genealogical works.

Among genealogical works in the Zhou Dynasty, the most complete and systematic one is the *Shi ben*, which records the origin of surnames, lineage and residence, creation before death, posthumous titles and other deeds of emperors, nobles and officials from Yellow Emperor to Spring and Autumn period and Warring States period, “consisting of fifteen volumes, such as *Genealogy of Emperors*, *Genealogy of Nobles*, *Genealogy of Ministers*, *Clans and Surnames*, *Residence*, *Creation*, *Posthumous Titles*, etc. The *Shi ben* is not only an ancient summative genealogical work gathering imperial lineages in one book, but also the forerunner worshiped by grand genealogical works of later generations. The publication of genealogical works such as the *Shi Ben* indicates Chinese genealogy has been separated from its original form, marking the official birth of Chinese genealogy.

- (3) The prosperity stage: from Wei, Jin, and the Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Tang Dynasty. Chinese genealogy was born in the Zhou Dynasty, developed in the Han Dynasty and entered its golden age from the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Tang Dynasty.

In the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, officials were selected by nine-rank system. Politically, aristocratic families monopolized official career and controlled government. Economically, the development of landlords and manors led to the expansion of clan power. Therefore, genealogy became a tool for families to protect their special interests. Zheng Qiao 郑樵 (1104–1162) pointed out in the *Tong Zhi* 通志 (General treatises): *Shi Zu Lue Xu* 氏族略序 (Preface to the history of family clans), “since Sui and Tang Dynasties, there have been official genealogy and family genealogy. The election of officials must base on official genealogy, and marriage must base on genealogy.” In order to meet the needs of compiling genealogies and maintaining family status, the state set up special genealogy bureau and genealogy officials, and genealogies were kept as important data in the bureau. In the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, compiling genealogies become such a common practice that a large number of genealogical books were written, and a large number of scholars engaged in compilation and research of genealogies. Two genealogical schools represented by Jia and Wang were formed, which played an important role in the development of Chinese genealogy. In the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, family genealogy is characterized by the integration of political showboating of great officials and dignitaries and marriage between families of equal social rank and affined relatives. Therefore, the function of genealogy in the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties was to advocate family background and distinguish marriages to protect the rights and interests of family groups. The development of Chinese genealogy reached a new height during the Tang Dynasty. The ruler of Tang Dynasty was a new aristocrat in Guanlong area, so in order to consolidate the rule of the new empire and

improve the political status of new aristocrats from poor families and common landlords, it was inevitable to suppress the old power in Shandong to establish the highest position of the Li family and Guanlong aristocracy. In order to obtain social and legal recognition, new gentry with royal families as the core must write down their highest social position into genealogies. Therefore, from the beginning of the reign of Emperor Taizong, while strengthening imperial examination, the government consistently used genealogy as a powerful tool to change the previous standard of family name measurement. Through the Tang Dynasty, according to the will of rulers, three official campaigns to compile genealogies were launched, i.e., *Annals of Surnames* during the reign of Emperor Taizong, *Records of Surnames* during the reign of Emperor Gaozong and *Records of Surnames in the Great Tang Dynasty* during the reign of Emperor Zhongzong. Through the above official campaigns aiming at “only respecting royal families of today”, genealogical works achieved the purpose of suppressing the old power, and established the highest status of Li and Wu families. In the new noble group, the royal family and meritorious officials of Tang Dynasty were the main component, replacing royal families in Shandong and Southeast China as its social foundation to consolidate feudal rule of Tang Dynasty. In the late Tang Dynasty, the poet Liu Yuxi’s famous poem “swallows which skimmed by painted eaves in bygone days are dipping now among the humble homes’ doorways” is a true portrayal of power change of old and new gentries at that time.

While the compilation of official genealogies in the Tang Dynasty was large in scale, the compilation of private genealogies also developed rapidly. The practice of compiling private genealogies was very common, which gave birth to a considerable number of private genealogies and a number of famous genealogists. Unlike genealogists of Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, those of the Tang Dynasty not only presided over the compilation of official genealogies, but also participated in that of private genealogies. The Tang Dynasty was a critical period serving as a link between past and future in the development of Chinese genealogy.

- (4) The transformation stage. The Song Dynasty was an important period of reform and transformation in China’s genealogical history, which extended to the Yuan Dynasty. During the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties (220–589), and the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581–907), both official and private genealogies were prosperous. However, by the Song Dynasty, these trends had changed. First, official genealogies fell into desuetude. The patriarchal clan system and the aristocratic families suffered a fatal blow as a result of the further implementation of the imperial examination system, the late Tang Dynasty’s peasant uprising and the Five Dynasties’ successive years of war. Official genealogies lost their practical value and significance, as they no longer showed the social status of the elite. Consequently, they faded away. Private genealogies subsequently prospered. However, they were destroyed by continuous wars within the Five Dynasties. Yet some were recovered, and they developed during Emperor

Renzong's Song Dynasty reign (1010–1063). They even became more prevalent during the Southern Song Dynasty.

During the Song Dynasty, there were significant changes to how genealogies were compiled/revised, compared to those of the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern, and Sui and Tang Dynasties. The first is in purpose. During the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, genealogies mainly had a social and political function. They were used to select officials, find matches for marriage, and distinguish noble and humble. By the Song Dynasty, the social and political functions of genealogies had more or less disappeared. Instead, they had a moral, educational function, and taught people to revere their ancestors, unite with other clans, respect their elders and care for those they love. The second is in form. During the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, and the Sui and Tang Dynasties, both official and private genealogies were compiled. But during the Song Dynasty, official genealogies were abandoned, and private genealogies developed instead, and quickly. The imperial court no longer had a special agency to compile and manage genealogies. Genealogies instead became purely private affairs. The third is in genealogical chart. Before the Song Dynasty, genealogies were generally not unified over how many generations they included in one pedigree chart. Some included seven generations, some included six, and some five, etc. During the Song Dynasty, however, Ouyang Xiu and Sun Xun implemented a five-generation pedigree chart according to the principle of having “close relatives”, reflected in the “five degrees of mourning attire, or “wufu”, and “nine grades of relationships, or *jiuzu*”, which was extremely influential and was commonly adopted during the Song Dynasty. This meant China entered a new stage of development, in terms of the methodology for genealogical compilations. The fourth is in genealogy content. During the Song Dynasty, the contents of genealogies matured and became much richer due to the popularity of private genealogies, their significant change in function, and the popularity of Ouyang's and Sun's “five-generation” pedigree styles. The fifth is the change to how often genealogies were renewed. Before the Song Dynasty, some genealogies were revised, but it was not common practice and revisions normally only happened after a long period of time. However, during the Song Dynasty, when the practice of compiling private genealogies was more common, people began revising their genealogies repeatedly. Zhu Xi 朱熹, a neo-Confucian master, said, “it is not filial to renew your family genealogy after more than three generations”. He further promoted the popularity of renewing genealogical records after the Southern Song Dynasty. In short, the Song Dynasty was in an important period of reform and transformation for genealogies and basic frameworks were established for later generations.

- (5) The perfection stage. During the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), Chinese genealogies developed into a more mature style. There were new, inevitable developments after the transformation and transition of genealogies in the Song and Yuan Dynasties (960–1368). These were closely related to the politics, economy, and culture of the Ming Dynasty, which was the late period of Chinese feudalism.