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## Research and Documentation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Oral History and Genealogy of the Yuan Shikai Family

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### Abstract

The oral histories and genealogies have long been used by historians, archaeologists, sociologists, ethnologists, and demographers in their investigation of past human behavior on social and historical evidences relating to a lineage organization or a clan. Chinese genealogical records has been used for thousands of years to record the genealogical history of a family, including a family's origin, its subordinate lines, names and ages of the members, records of marriages, births and deaths, merits and deeds, and in early days brief biographical information of solely the male family members. This paper will examine the history of Chinese names and the genealogical records for *jiapu*. It details the significance of Chinese names and introduces the types of Chinese names and their meanings, followed by the history and development of surnames, clan names, and generation names. The highlight of paper includes the oral history and genealogy of the Xiangcheng 項城 Yuan family tracing to the lineage of Yuan Shikai, the first President of the Republic of China. In this genealogical study, the author examines the genealogical chart of the Yuan family on iron plate (Yuan Shi Tie Pai Jiapu 袁氏鐵牌家譜) and the stone tablet in the Yuan Family Chapel (Yuan Shi Jia Miao Bei 袁氏家廟碑) based on their value, functions, and importance. The Yuan genealogy was identified as a source for the study of Chinese genealogies in relation to the Chinese polygamy, family structure, demography, economic conditions, generational orders,

and social and political studies. The paper ends with the library documentation, preservation, and research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century focusing on the importance of Chinese family history and genealogical research for *jiapu* 家譜. A selected bibliography about the Yuan Shikai family is included at the end for further readings.

### Highlights

- History of Chinese Names and Genealogical Records
- Types of Chinese Names and their Meanings
- Oral History and Genealogy of the Yuan Shikai Family
- Resource and Documentation on Chinese Genealogy
- Library Cooperation and Resource-sharing on Chinese Genealogy

**Key words:** Chinese genealogical records; Chinese oral history; Yuan Shikai; Library genealogy collections; Resource-sharing; Collection management

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### INTRODUCTION

The oral histories and genealogies have long been used by historians, archaeologists, sociologists, ethnologists, and demographers in their investigation of past human behavior on social and historical evidences relating to a lineage organization or a clan. Chinese genealogical records, also called *pudie* 譜牒, *zongpu* 宗譜, *zupu* 族譜, *jiapu* 家譜, *zipu* 支譜, or *jiacheng* 家乘, has been used for thousands of years to record the genealogical history of a family, including

a family's origin, its subordinate lines, names and ages of the members, records of marriages, births and deaths, merits and deeds, and in early days brief biographical information of solely the male family members.

This paper will examine the history of Chinese names and the genealogical records for jiapu. It details the significance of Chinese names and introduces the types of Chinese names and their meanings, followed by the historical development of surnames, clan names, and generation names. The highlight of paper includes the oral history and genealogy of the Xiangcheng 項城 Yuan family tracing to the lineage of Yuan Shikai, the first president of the Republic of China. In this genealogical study, the author examines the genealogical chart of the Yuan family on iron plate (Yuan Shi Tie Pai Jiapu 袁氏鐵牌家譜) and the stone tablet in the Yuan Family Chapel (Yuan Shi Jia Miao Bei 袁氏家廟碑) based on their value, functions, and importance. The Yuan genealogy was identified as a source for the study of Chinese genealogies in relation to the Chinese polygamy, family structure, demography, economic conditions, generational orders, and social and political studies. The paper summarizes the responsibilities and concerns for librarians, including subject-specific training, collection management, community needs, reference services, legal research, personnel, access, preservation, and fiscal considerations for genealogy services. It concludes with the library documentation, preservation, and research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century focusing on the importance of Chinese family history and genealogical research for jiapu.

## 1. HISTORY OF CHINESE NAMES AND GENEALOGICAL RECORDS

In traditional societies, genealogies were generally kept in oral tradition. Such oral genealogies, recited in public at ceremonial occasions, became one of the roots of family lineage. An ordinary household rarely is able to have its own genealogy unless the family belongs to the upper class or to the aristocracy of that society. When the art of writing system was known, genealogies were compiled and the tradition of preserving family histories began to develop (Eberhard, 1972).

Chinese genealogies are living documents and its production is entirely a private matter. The genealogy book is financed by the family members and drawn up by well-educated man chosen from the clan. Although there is no specific guideline to follow, the general practice has been to trace the clan's root back to as far as possible to the first generation and treat its evolution in detail, to record the achievements of the family members in a clan, whether it is political, military, academic, or commercial in nature, to praise the clan's ancestors, to promote harmony in families, and to encourage new generations to

follow family disciplines by maintaining the good name of the clan (Lo, 1972).

Genealogical records have always been cherished by mankind, both in ancient and in modern society. They have long been used by historians, archaeologists, sociologists, ethnologists, and demographers in their investigation of past human behavior on social and historical evidences relating to a lineage organization or a clan. These records were preserved in written form from very early times. According to the documented history of Chinese literature, genealogies before the Song 宋 Dynasty (A. D. 960-1679) was rather simple in content and used primarily for recording personal and family history or data. From Ming 明 (A. D. 1368-1644) to the succeeding dynasties, genealogical records were enriched in greater detail on family traditions, marriages, merits or deeds, rewards, and so on. Thus, the functions of family history books became diversified and various types and formats of genealogical records prospered. This phenomenon is evidenced by the numerous genealogical documents that emerged after the Ming 明 and Qing 清 Dynasties.

The Chinese genealogical records, also called pudie 譜牒, zongpu 宗譜, zupu 族譜, jiapu 家譜, zipu 支譜, or jiacheng 家乘, has been used for thousands of years to record the genealogical history of a family, including a family's origin, its subordinate lines, names and ages of the members, records of marriages, births and deaths, merits and deeds, and in early days brief biographical information of solely the male family members. According to ancient Chinese documents, family names were created and used by the Chinese people about 2,800 years ago during the Three Dynasties, Xia 夏, Shang 商, and Zhou 周. The legend indicated that the emperor Fu Xi 伏羲(2852-2737? B. C.) (Lip, 1988) established the Chinese surname system and thus, all Chinese are required to have a family name (Lip, 1988). The purpose of adopting a name was to distinguish the families and also to prevent the marriages between persons of the same family name. Genealogical roots were also found in the preoccupation era as evidenced in the oracle bones (jiaguwen 甲骨文) and bronze inscriptions (jinwen 金文 or zongdingwen 鐘鼎文) of the Shang and Zhou dynasties (Wilkinson, 1973).

Genealogical tradition was flourished following the Zhou conquest of the Shang Dynasty around 1122 B. C. with records of emperors, lords, nobles, and officials. From the Zhou to the succeeding Qin 秦 Dynasty (221-206 B. C.), Shi Huangdi 始皇帝 pursued an aggressive policy directed against the remaining feudal states, he had assumed the full control of his government, with the weakening of the power of the nobles, the genealogical tradition was flourished and spread widely to civilian people as well (Kiang, 1934).

Scholars also consider other possibilities such as the legendary emperor Huangdi 黃帝 (2697-2597? B. C.) and the early Chinese matriarchal societies as possible sources

of Chinese family names. From an anthropological point of view, the totems of the ancient Chinese people, an animal or plant serving as the emblem of a family or clan, as evidenced in the oracle bones and bronze inscriptions of the Shang and Zhou dynasties also had a great impact on the Chinese family names. In all, the family names of legendary emperors, the family names of the ancient matriarchal clans, and the totems of the ancient people fostered the evolution of the Chinese family names (Chao, 2000).

## 2. TYPES OF CHINESE NAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS

In ancient times, Chinese authors or scholars always have several names: a personal name (ming, 名), a courtesy or literary name (zi, 字), a fancy name (hao 號), given by themselves or others, a pen name (biming, 筆名), used in writing and publications, a school name, used from the first period of education, and an official name (guanming 官名), assigned to a person upon earning an academic degree or official rank (Lin, 1937). In the course of lifetime, as their educational experiences and personal tastes developed, they often give themselves another name to signify their academic progress or meaningful contribution to the society. Therefore, a person may have several fancy names or haos 號 (Louie, 1998). In addition, a prominent person is often addressed by his birthplace, and the great emperors or imperial officials have posthumous titles (shiming 謚名 or fenghao 封號) bestowed upon them for their distinguished merit after death.

Another common form of practice is the use of nicknames or pseudonyms (chuohao 綽號) (Shu, 1969). Chinese authors first used pseudonyms in their fictions, plays, short stories, and folk literature. It was common to use more than one pseudonym for a Chinese author. Later, pseudonyms were adopted most often by compilers or editors as an expression to show their respect to the writers.

## 3. FROM SURNAMES TO CLAN NAMES

Since ancient times, there were two categories of family names in use, surnames (xing 姓) and clan names (shi 氏). The surname originated from the name of the village in which one lived or the family to which one belonged, while the clan name derived from the name of the territory or the title, which might be the posthumous title, bestowed by the emperor for an individual's outstanding merit after death (Louie, 1998). "Surname" or xing (姓) was used by the female member of a family and the word *xing* (姓) is a combination of the characters - female (Nü 女) and birth (生). Xing was used primarily to determine the marriage between families. On the other hand, the "clan name" or

shi was used by the male side of the family members and the word "shi" means noble (guizu 貴族). Clan name was given to indicate blood ties and social status. Therefore, only the aristocrats or nobles have surnames and/or clan names but ordinary people were known only by their personal names (Smith, 1970).

Xing and shi became merged into one and lost their aristocratic association around the Zhou 周 Dynasty (1122-221 B. C.). During the Qin 秦 Dynasty (221-206 B. C.) to the succeeding Han 漢 Dynasty (206 B. C.-A. D. 220), the feudal system disintegrated with the weakening power of the nobles. As the consequences, Chinese began to adopt clan names and some even took on clan names as their surnames. Since then, the surnames and clan names have been emerged as one in the same sense (Chao, 2000).

## 4. GENERATION NAMES

In the traditional Chinese society, generation names were assigned by the progenitor of a clan in which each generation in his lineage was given a character which was generally taken from a propitious verse with rhymes. It is usually one of the characters in a two-character given name which is referred to as a generation name (Lin, 1988). Through the adoption of generation names, the progenitor aspired to enlighten the ideals of the verse throughout his lineage (Lin, 1988). Generation names can distinguish the family rank of a person for his hierarchy in a clan. Therefore, they can foster the familial relationships among relatives as well as promote the virtue of reminding and memorizing a person's family root for his future generations.

For instance, my ancestor Taipu gong 太僕公 belongs to the fifty-first generation of the He 賀 family in Lianxiang 漣湘 clan, from Xiangxiang 湘鄉 county, Hunan 湖南 province has picked and adopted the following verse since his generation:

Han Zhi You Ren Fang	漢志友仁芳
Chong Tian Fu Shou Chang	崇天福壽長
Xi Sheng Wen Chai Guang	希聖文才廣
Xing Long Yung Dai Chang	興隆永代昌
Hua Xian Si Cheng Shao	華顯思承紹
An Bang Si Yan Liang	安邦嗣彥良
Fu Gui Jia Sheng Zhen	富貴家聲振
Jiu Yuan Chuan Shu Xiang	久遠傳書香 (He, 1994)

These forty characters would be taken on as the generation names for forty generations in that order, that is, beginning with "han 漢" for the 51<sup>st</sup> generation through "xiang 香" for the 90<sup>th</sup>. The generation names may be used either as the first or second word in a two-character of given names. Traditionally, these names were carried on solely through the male family members. However, the rule has been changed due to the shift to the upper class status for females in modern society.

According to the list of generational orders, my father He Dailian 賀代煉 belongs to the 69<sup>th</sup> generation (*dai* 代) of the family while my brothers, Changshen 昌申 and Changxiang 昌湘 are members of the succeeding 70<sup>th</sup> “chang 昌” generation.

## 5. ORAL HISTORY OF THE YUAN SHIKAI FAMILY

Oral history is a life history interview with individuals, families, or friends, and preserved on audiotapes, videotapes, or transcribed on written documents (Fletcher, 1986). These interviews are generally conducted with people who observed past events in their memories and perceptions to be kept as an aural record for future generations. Oral history strives to document research study from different perspectives for information that cannot be ascertained from written sources. Besides publications, either published or unpublished, information gathered through oral history generally collected by historical societies, archives and libraries.

### 5.1 Method

There are many ways of creating oral histories or carrying out the study of oral history with individual disciplines or contexts. Historians, journalists, social scientists, folklorists, sociologists, anthropologists, and many others employ some format of interviewing in their research. The common ethics and most important standards of practice are attaining informed consents of those being interviewed through copyright ownership which is essential for publication and archival deposits.

You can use either audio or video recorders to tape the interviews. MP3 audio players and recorders are recommended. They can capture the sound of your interviewer’s voice and record his or her stories, and will be stored permanently. A single lens reflex (SLR) digital camera will facilitate the interviewer to capture images of the narrator, as well as documents, pictures, newspaper clippings, and other miscellaneous records.

### 5.2 Resources

The Oral History Association (OHA), founded in 1966 (Sitton, Mehaffy & Davis, 1983), is the largest professional organization of its type. It offers a rich variety of resources for those interested in every facet of doing, promoting, researching, collecting, and preserving oral history. Included in its membership are teachers, librarians, archivists, local historians, folklorists, anthropologists, government officials, journalists, and numerous institutions and organizations such as volunteer and professional groups, museums, societies, schools and colleges, business corporations, public and private agencies, and historical organizations of every size.

Through the publications and meetings of the association, members have access to general articles

and scholarly papers, book reviews, and bibliographic assistance, news of oral history projects, announcements about funding of projects, and innovations in an ever-changing field. OHA’s homepage (<http://www.oralhistory.org/resources/>) provides information on *OHA Wiki*, an online based wiki engine similar to Wikipedia and *H-Oralhist*, a network for scholars and professionals affiliated with OHA who are active in studies related to oral histories.

### 5.3 Yuan Shikai (1859-1916), His Influence and Legacy

Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) was one of the most significant military officials and politicians during the late Qing Dynasty and the early years of the Republic of China. He was born in 1859 in Xiangcheng 項城 of Henan 河南 Province. The Yuan family had been prosperous since the reign of Qing Emperor Daoguang 道光 (r. A. D. 1820-1850). His grandfather, Yuan Jiasan 袁甲三 (1806-1863) was an officer of the Qing government who won many battles during the Taiping Rebellion (Taiping tian guo 太平天國). His father, Yuan Baozong 袁保中, and uncles were active in suppressing rebellions in Northern China in the 1850s and 1860s. Yuan Shikai was the fourth of six sons and was adopted by his father’s younger brother Yuan Baoqing 袁保慶, then an important provincial governor, introduced him to the Qing Court. His first active duty came when he was sent to Korea in 1882 as the Chinese resident in Korea, then under Chinese rights of suzerainty. Shortly afterwards he won recognition of the Qing Court by helping the Korean government to suppress a palace coup. In 1899, when he was appointed as Governor of Shandong 山東, Yuan commanded his military troops to ensure the suppression of the Boxer Uprising (Yi he tuan 義和團). Winning support from foreign powers, Yuan was able to build the strongest military force in China, modeled after Japan. During the revolution of 1911, a truce in which the last Emperor of Qing Dynasty Xuantong 宣統 abdicated on February 12, 1912, and Sun Yat-sen 孫中山, President of the provisional government, resigned in Yuan’s favor as the first President of the Chinese Republic. Yuan’s career and contribution to Chinese history was marked for his authoritarian control of military dictatorship, a presidency with sweeping powers between 1912 and 1915, and his proclamation by democratic process as emperor of the Hongxian 洪憲 Dynasty on January 1, 1916. His monarchy lasted only six months, as foreign opposition and revolutionaries led by Sun Yat-sen forced him to give up his throne and reinstate the Republic. In June 1916, exhausted and ill, Yuan died of uremia at age fifty-seven.

### 5.4 Interviewing the Descendants of Yuan Shikai Family

The Yuan clan kept very detailed and accurate genealogies until the generation of Yuan Shikai. However, after

Yuan's death, the family fell from power and its surviving members were dispersed in the wars and revolutions that plagued China for half a century. Consequently, although many research studies and books have been published about the family histories of Yuan Shikai and his ancestors, none is available on the subject of genealogical records of contemporary Yuan family members living in different parts of the world. This oral history and genealogy project, thus, is an ambitious attempt to fill the gap in the genealogical history of one of the most distinguished families in modern China.

Sponsored by PSC-CUNY Research Awards, the author and her collaborator, KaChuen Yuan Gee, a granddaughter of Yuan Shikai, embarked on a genealogical research trip to China for a month in 2008 and again for two weeks in 2012 to search for her family roots. The purpose of the trips was to collect source materials for a new book on contemporary Yuan descendants about whom they plan to write. They visited many cities where Yuan descendants live, including Yuan's ancestral home in Xiangcheng, Henan, and his tomb in Anyang. To collect information about contemporary Yuan relatives, they interviewed dozens of people associated with the family and gathered many interesting and moving oral history stories.

These interviews, ranging from thirty minutes to two hours, are primarily focused on the grandchildren of Yuan Shikai. The ages of narrators are between fifties and eighties and they are currently living in Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, and Xiangcheng. The oral history interviews consist of individual's family background, lifetime experiences, political instability that impact upon different family members, the influence of Yuan family background on the descendants, the impact of Cultural Revolution, childhood memory of their grandfather Yuan Shikai, their extended family structure in other parts of the world, and current living conditions. Transcripts were recorded on MP3 files, transcribed on paper, and saved in Word documents with Chinese and English versions. There were other materials collected during the trip including photo images and audio files of guided tours taped in Henan Xiangcheng 河南項城 Museum, Tianjin Xiao Zhan Military Training Museum (Tianjin Xiao Zhan Lian Bing Bo Wu Guan 天津小站練兵博物館), Yuan Shikai's birthplace of Xiangcheng Yuan Zai 項城袁寨, and his burial site in Anyang Yuan Lins 安陽袁林.

## 6. GENEALOGY OF THE YUAN SHIKAI FAMILY

According to the Genealogical Record of the Xiangcheng Yuan Family (*Xiangcheng Yuan shi li dai pu xi zhi* 項城袁氏歷代譜系志) (Yuan, 2012) and the Comprehensive History of the Clans (*Tong zhi shi zu lue* 通志氏族略) (Zheng, 1934), the founder of the surname Yuan was traced to the Emperor Shun

who was one of the Five Emperors (Wu Di 五帝) in ancient China. They were mythological rulers during the period from ca. 2852 to 2205 B. C. who were: The Yellow Emperor (Huang Di 黃帝), Emperor Zhuanxu 顓頊, Emperor Ku (Di Ku 帝嚳), Emperor Yao (Di Yao 帝堯), and Emperor Shun (Di Shun 帝舜) (Watson, 1958).

Emperor Shun was settled in Wei River (Wei Sui 媯水) near Yongji 永濟, Shangxi 山西 Province and later adopted the surname *Wei* 媯. From Xia 夏, Shang 商 to the Zhou 周 Dynasties, the Wei family prospered and gradually moved to the upper class. Emperor Zhou Wuwang 周武王 sent his daughter, the Imperial Princess Chang (Chang Gongzhu 長公主) to marry Wei Man 媯滿, who was a Feudal Prince (Daifu 大夫) of the State of Chen (Chen kuo 陳國).

Wei Man 媯滿, officially entitled Duke Hu (Hu Gong 胡公), or Hu Gong Man 胡公滿, became the founder of Yuan family. Ten generations have been passed from Xihou 犀侯, Jinggeng 靖庚, Hun 愐, Fu 甫, Boshu 伯順, Tafu 他父, Zaibo 戴伯, Zhengshu 鄭叔, Jinfu 金父, to Zhuangbo 莊伯, and from Zhuangbo then passed to Boyuan 伯爰 and Taotu 濤塗. Due to Taotu's outstanding service to the Zhou Court, he was honored by the Duke Qi (Qi Huangong 齊桓公) and bestowed in Yangxia 陽夏 (present Henan Taikang 河南太康). He adopted the social name (zi 字) *Yuan* (爰) from his family and called Yuan Taotu (爰濤塗). Since *Yuan* (爰) and *Yuan* (轅) were homonyms, his descendants adopted *Yuan* (轅) as their common surname. It was until the Western Han (Xihan 西漢) Dynasty that the simplified character *Yuan* (袁) was used as their common surname. The family settled primarily in Luoyang 洛陽, Henan Province.

According to *Xing shi kao lue* 姓氏考略 (Chen, 1985), the Yuan clan belongs to the family associations of Chen District (Chen jun 陳郡), Ruan 汝南, and Pongcheng 彭城. In *Yuan He xing zuan* 元何姓纂 (Lin, 1975), from the Han to the Northern and Southern Dynasties, members of the Yuan family have grown to 28 persons, including three Dukes and 17 other government officials. Throughout the Tang 唐, Song 宋, Yuan 元, Ming 明, and Qing 清 Dynasties, there were prominent figures from the Yuan family including the Government Secretary (Zaixiang 宰相) Yuan Zhihong 袁智弘 in Tang, historian Yuan Shu 袁樞 in Song, literary author Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 and military commander Yuan Chonghuan 袁崇煥 in Ming, and the poet Yuan Mei 袁枚 and artist Yuan Jiang 袁江 in Qing Dynasties. The most significant person among the Yuan clan was Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 who was a military official and rose to become the leader of the clan with a brilliant political career in the late Qing Dynasty.

According to the Genealogical Record of the Xiangcheng Yuan Family (*Xiangcheng Yuan shi li dai pu xi zhi* 項城袁氏歷代譜系志), Yuan was ranked as the 37<sup>th</sup> largest Chinese surnames with a total population

of approximately 620,000 in China (Yuan, 2012). The families settled primarily in Henan 河南, Sichuan 四川, Hunan 湖南, and Hebei 河北. Among them, Henan has the largest Yuan population, about 10.6% of the total.

### 6.1 YUAN SHI TIE PAI JIAPU

One of the most important source to trace the early Yuan genealogy is the Yuan Shi Tie Pai Jiapu 袁氏鐵牌家譜 (Yuan & Bao, 1874, Figure 1) which was compiled in late Qing Dynasty of the Tongzhi 同治 (r. A. D. 1861-1874) period in 1874 by Yuan Shikai's father Yuan Baozhong 袁保中 and his uncle Yuan Baohuan 袁保桓. The genealogical chart was engraved on an iron plate of 90 millimeter high, 280 millimeter wide and half millimeter thick in rectangular shape. It consists of 231 Yuan descendants. The plate was hanged on the wall of the Yuan compound in the Yuan ancestral hall of Yuan Ge 袁閣 in Xiangcheng, Henan (Gee & Chao, 2009). During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, in the Big Iron Extracting Period of Da Lian Gang 大煉鋼 in 1958, the Communists demanded all useful irons and metals be burned and extracted to make military weapons. Fortunately, Yuan Jiajun 袁家俊, a 15<sup>th</sup> generation descendant, secretly made ink rubbings of the plate on cotton papers before it was destroyed (Figure 2). Many years later, he passed the document to his nephew for safe keeping. Without his effort, the genealogical record will not be preserved until today (Gee & Chao, 2009).

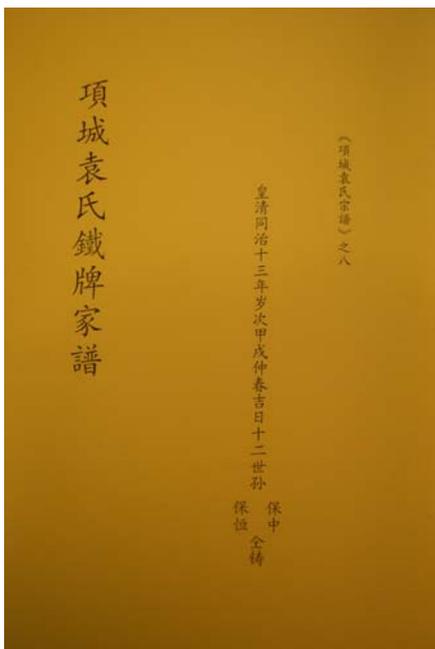


Figure 1  
Yuan Shi Tie Pai Jiapu 袁氏鐵牌家譜

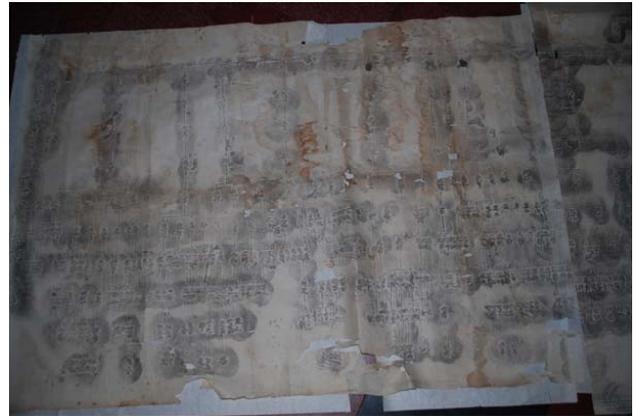


Figure 2  
Ink Rubbings of the Yuan Shi Tie Pai Jiapu 袁氏鐵牌家譜

In traditional Chinese society, generation names were assigned by the ancestor of a clan in a specific order. Each generation was given a character which generally taken from a propitious verse with rhymes. It is usually one of the characters in a two-character given name, which is referred to as a generation name (Louie, 1998).

While family ranks for the first seven generations cannot be traced, *Yuan Shi Tie Pai Jiapu* 袁氏鐵牌家譜 (Yuan & Bao, 1874) lists the generational orders of the Yuan clan from the 8<sup>th</sup> “zhi 志” to the 48<sup>th</sup> “yi 儀” generations. Additional forty characters were added to the updated edition in *Yuan shi zongpu* 袁氏宗譜 (Yuan, 2006) which complete the total of 88<sup>th</sup> generations. Here's the complete list:

Zhi	Jiu	Yao	San	志九耀三,
Bao	Shi	Ke	Jia	保世克家,
Qi	Wen	Shao	Wu	啟文紹武,
Wei	Wei	Guo	Hua	威衛國華.
Ling	De	Shou	Kao	令德壽考,
Sheng	Chi	Jia	Fa	繩池嘉伐.
Ru	Gang	Ji	Zhao	茹綱紀兆,
Er	Dong	Liang	Kuan	爾懂梁寬.
Cheng	Zhao	Lie	Ji	承昭列記,
Zhu	Cheng	Xiang	Yi	祖呈祥儀.
Ji	Xian	Yang	Shan	繼賢揚善,
Yan	Xu	Tian	Chang	延續天昌.
Han	Mo	Heng	Gui	翰墨恒貴,
Tong	Rui	Zhi	Qiang	通睿智強.
Zi	Yan	Kai	Ding	紫硯開鼎,
Ren	Ci	Lun	Chang	仁慈倫常.
Hui	Cheng	Fan	Xiu	惠成番秀,
Du	Xin	Yu	Zhang	篤信裕彰.
Zun	Wang	Yue	Tai	尊望悅泰,
Ying	Zou	Yong	Kang	英胄永康.

The following list of ancestral lines and the succeeding family trees (Figure 3-a & Figure 3-b) demonstrate Yuan Shikai's ancestral line from the first generation of Yuan Chiheng 袁持衡 to the 13<sup>th</sup> generation of Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (Hou & Nan, 2005).

1 <sup>st</sup>	袁持衡	Yuan Chiheng	5 <sup>th</sup>	袁体二	Yuan Tier
2 <sup>nd</sup>	袁膺舉	Yuan Yingju	6 <sup>th</sup>	袁方芭	Yuan Fangba
3 <sup>rd</sup>	袁步月	Yuan Buyue	7 <sup>th</sup>	袁理全	Yuan Liquan
4 <sup>th</sup>	袁學詩	Yuan Xueshi	8 <sup>th</sup>	袁志恭	Yuan Zhigong
			9 <sup>th</sup>	袁九芝	Yuan Jiuzhi
			10 <sup>th</sup>	袁耀東	Yuan Yaodong
			11 <sup>th</sup>	袁樹三	Yuan Shusan
			12 <sup>th</sup>	袁保中	Yuan Baozhong
			13 <sup>th</sup>	袁世凱	Yuan Shikai

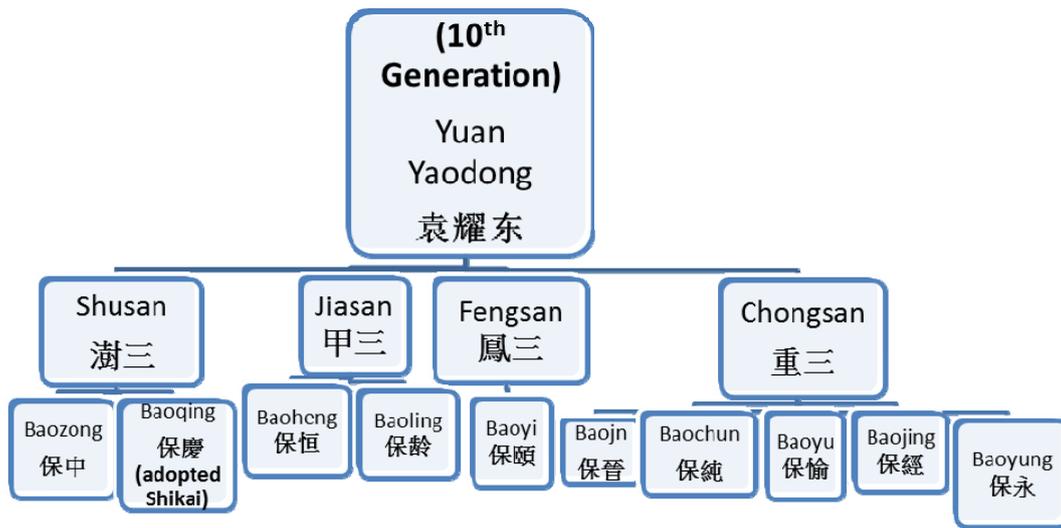


Figure 3-a  
 Yuan Shikai Family Genealogical Chart 1

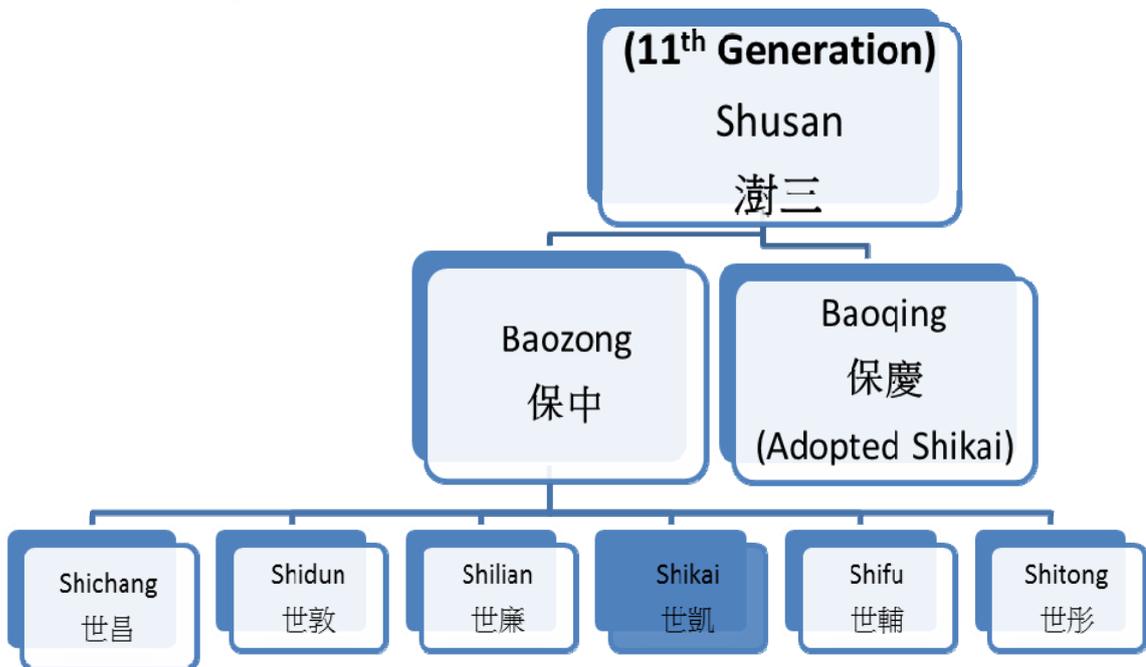


Figure 3-b  
 Yuan Shikai Family Genealogical Chart 2

The Yuan Family Chapel was established in 1910 during the period of Emperor Xuantong 宣統 by Duke Wencheng (Wencheng Gong 文誠公) through donations. It was used as a common gathering place for the Yuan descendants to commemorate the prominent members in the family. The stone tablet called Yuan Shi Jia Miao Bei 袁氏家廟碑 was erected in the Chapel (Figure 5). It describes the history and development of the clan

regarding the migration of Yuan ancestors in the early Ming Dynasty from western to northern China and the settlement of Yuan descendants (Figure 4) in the Yuan compound of Yuan Ge 袁閣. During the Cultural Revolution when the family's genealogical chart on iron plate was destroyed, the stone tablet remained intact. It now becomes a permanent historical relic of the Henan Xiangcheng Museum.

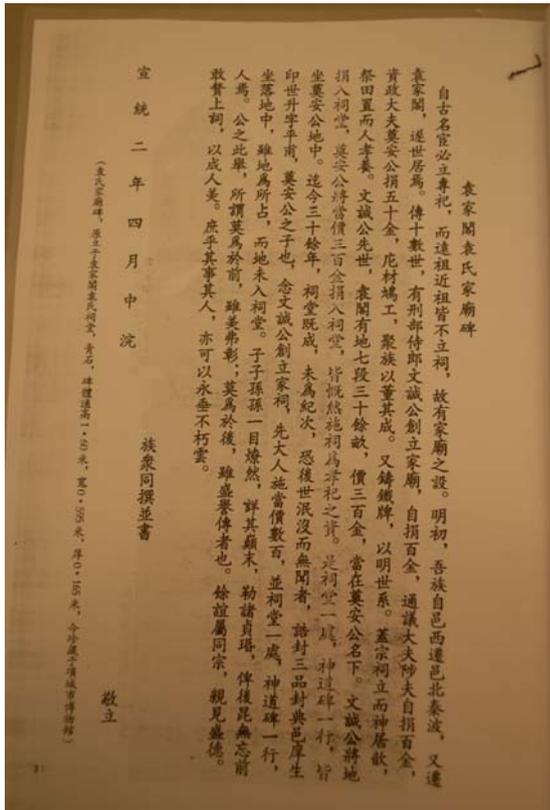


Figure 4  
Yuan Shi Jia Miao Bei 袁氏家廟碑

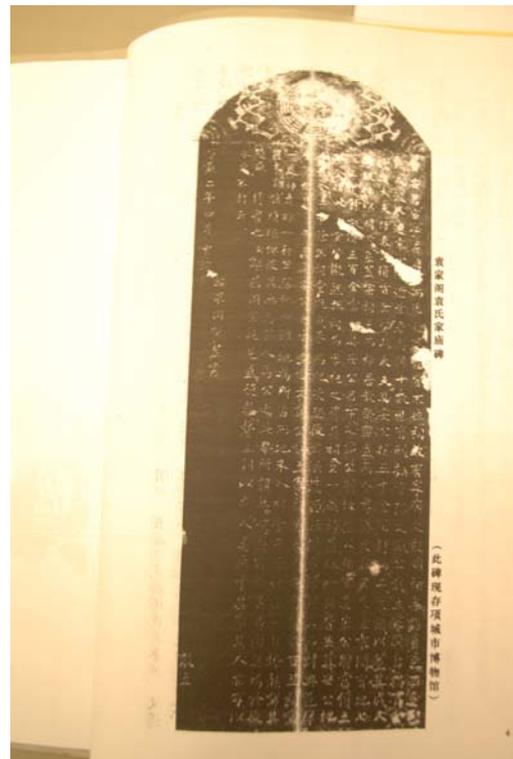


Figure 5  
Image of Yuan Shi Jia Miao Bei 袁氏家廟碑

## 6.2 Yuan Genealogy As a Source for the Study of Chinese Society

The history and origin of the Yuan Shikai family provides a rich source of information for the study of Chinese genealogies, particularly in the areas of Chinese polygamy, family structure, demography, economic conditions, generational orders, and social and political implications. Based on the research analysis of Yuan Shikai family, the following characteristics can substantiate the importance of genealogical studies.

### 6.2.1 Polygamy

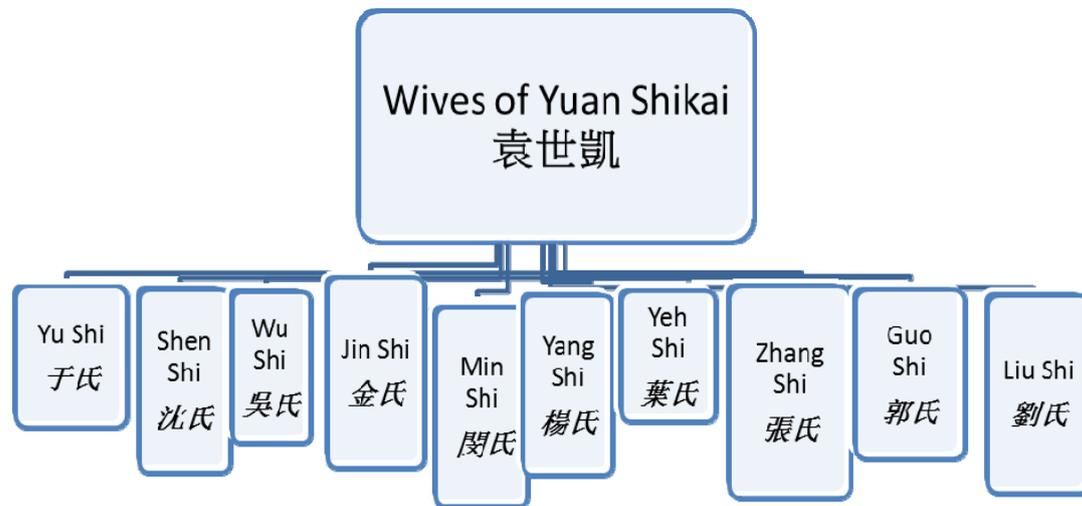
In traditional Chinese society, men had only one wife, but they could have as many concubines as they wanted and it is quite common for a man of status. Yuan Shikai was married to one wife and nine concubines. The large and extended family provides unique case for the study

of polygamy (Figure 6). Given names of his wives were not mentioned in jiapu and they were generally listed under their surnames with a suffix character immediately follows their maiden name, such as Yang Shi 楊氏 and Zhang Shi 張氏.

Shikai's first wife Yu Shi 于氏 and his nine concubines lived in the Yuan compound in a very organized and orderly manner. Each woman and her children occupied a separate quarter in the compound, with specific roles and duties assigned to certain senior concubines (Gee & Chao, 2012). For instance, the first wife Yu Shi was the female head of the household; while the first concubine, Shen Shi 沈氏, was Yuan's escort in diplomatic functions. During Shikai's twelve years of tenure in Korea, three Korean concubines, including the second concubine Wu Shi 吳氏, the third concubine Jin Shi 金氏, and the fourth concubine Min Shi 閔氏, were added to his household. They were,

in a way, a reward from the Korean royal house to Shikai for his help in suppressing the insurrections. His fifth concubine Yang Shi 楊氏 was in charge of the budget of the entire household, and was responsible for giving out allowances to other concubines. She was also the supervisor of the lower ranked junior concubines (Gee & Chao, 2012).

Information about the remaining concubines was scarce, except that they were beautiful courtesans bought either by Shikai himself or by his sons and offered to Shikai as gifts. There were: the sixth concubine Yeh Shi 葉氏, the seventh concubine Zhang Shi 張氏, the eighth concubine Guo Shi 郭氏, and the ninth concubine Liu Shi 劉氏 (Gee & Chao, 2012).



**Figure 6**  
**The Household of Yuan Shikai and His Wife and Concubines**

Although Shikai's household was very large, it was well organized and in good order. He divided his mansions into separate units, with each concubine and her entourage occupying one individual unit (Gee & Chao, 2009). His own quarters would be in the center of the house. Adult children and their families also had their own separate quarters. Everyone lived in his or her own territory without interfering with the other. Furthermore, the household was governed by very strict rules of protocol laid down by Shikai, and his first and fifth concubines Shen Shi and Yang Shi.

As to his children, Shikai was very strict with his sons but was more lenient and tolerant to his daughters. He set up a school at their residence and hired teachers to teach them modern subjects like English and math, but would not allow them to leave the compound without his permission. He believed that his children must be educated and trained so that they would be brought up as a useful person in the society (Gee & Chao, 2009).

This domestic governance system apparently worked well, as the concubines and their children lived peacefully until Yuan's death without open clashes and conflicts.

### 6.2.2 Family Structure

Genealogies can be used to trace the kinship, marriage, and heredity of family trait. By comparing the birthdays

of parents with the birthdays of children, we can find out the average age at which marriages were concluded and the period of fertility for the couples. Although genealogies may not report the reason for death or any physical abnormalities, through close examining the birth and death dates, we can also find out the birthrate, fertility rate, death rate, and consequently the length of life expectancy in a clan (Eberhard, 1972).

The study of the relative fertility of Shikai's wife and nine concubines can yield other interesting facts. The original wife Yu Shi 于氏 gave birth to one son, Yuan Keding 袁克定, the first son in the family and the other nine concubines had sixteen sons and fifteen daughters, a total of thirty-two children. Then, these seventeen sons in turn gave him forty-seven grandchildren bearing the last name of Yuan, and each of these children in turn had many children of their own. Together, there were seventy-nine direct descendants of Yuan. According to *Yuan shih zong zu* 袁氏宗譜, which includes a compiled list of bibliographies taken from The Shanghai Library's Genealogy Catalog of Yuan Families (Shanghai Library Yuan shi jia pu mu lu 上海圖書館袁氏家譜目錄, 2006), until present there have been approximately one thousand descendants of the Yuan clan.

In spite of polygamy, if a wife remained childless or without sons, she may practice adoption from family members in order to establish her role and have her name registered in the genealogy (Lo, 1972). Shikai's father Yuan Baozhong 袁保中 passed away shortly after Shikai's birth. He was given to Baozhong's brother Baoqing 保慶 to raise, as the latter had just lost an infant son. Shikai was officially adopted by his uncle Baoqing at age five. Shikai's first concubine Shen Shi 沈氏 who remained childless, adopted Kewen 克文 from the fourth wife Jin Shi 金氏. For the purpose of inheritance, all children were equally treated. However, the first son Keding 克定 will automatically become the head of the family upon death of his father.

The practice of using generation names has been a custom for the Yuan family to give all his sons and nephews of one generation of the generational order "ke order "ke 克" in a two-character given name. Through careful examination of the Yuan family history and genealogy, we can obtain valuable information regarding changes in the family structure over time, the social and economic factors affecting the birth rates of males or females, the political instability impacted upon different family members, the influence of Yuan family background on the descendants of Yuan Shikai, and the variations in the extended family structure in various parts of the world.

### 6.2.3 Social and Political Implications

The rise and fall of the Yuan family mirrored a dominant trend in Chinese social history for centuries. From a very humble beginning, a family gradually rose to prominence through passing the civil service examinations and accomplishments in military service, reaching its peak when one leader of the clan established a brilliant career, accumulating great wealth and fame for the family. Then, after the leader's death, the family declined rapidly because of the decadent life style of its descendants. Eventually, after its fortune was all spent, the family collapsed under the impact of external forces.

The rise and fall of the Yuan family also offered an interesting case study of the Chinese classical education and political system. Yuan Jiasan 袁甲三, the patriarch of the Yuan clan, was a scholar from a humble farming family, but rose to be a high ranking court minister because he passed the civil service examinations and obtained the Jin Shi 進士 title. In Imperial China, the only way for a son from a humble family to pursue a distinguished career in court bureaucracy was to study the Confucian Classics diligently for many years in order to pass the civil service examination at the highest level, winning the title Jin Shi 進士. From this stepping stone, he first served in court, then in the military, until his merits were recognized by the emperor. Also, because of his prominence and good court connections, Jiasan's sons and nephews were also appointed to high ranking government positions. Shikai, although he failed the civil service

examinations, he was still able to develop a distinguished military career because of his family's connections with the military and with the Qing Court.

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## CONCLUSION

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Libraries and institutions are role players in ensuring long-term archiving and documentation of information, through appropriate arrangements with publishers and collaborative initiatives with other libraries or institutions that hold major collections in specific subject areas such as local history and Chinese genealogical collections (Chao, 2006). Cooperative collection building and resources shared by cooperative institutions may be books, bibliographic data, digital collections, online databases, personnel, and planning activities. Library cooperation should not be confined solely to formal arrangement, but rather should be viewed in a much broader context of informal personal interaction and resource sharing (Seal, 2001). For instance, while library collaboration is indeed about sharing materials via interlibrary loan, document delivery, and collection management, it is also concerned with sharing individual library expertise and experiences through formal and informal personal interactions, virtual or on site joint conferences, online web seminars, distance learning experiences, librarians exchange programs, and resource sharing through foreign language holdings, local municipal documents, rare books and documents, and archives (Chao, 2003). Lately, libraries have also collaborated by sharing purchasing responsibilities, grouping together to obtain discounts or electronic resources and services, and establishing online initiatives such as the IDS Project (IDS, 2012), a mutually supportive resource-sharing cooperative within New York State to evaluate innovative resource-sharing strategies, policies and procedure that will optimize mutual access to the information resources of all IDS project member libraries.

An increasing number of Chinese Americans have become interested in tracing their roots and family origins; it would seem to follow that libraries should develop genealogical collections and welcome researchers. According to the guidelines prepared by American Library Association's Genealogy Committee from the History Section of the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA, 2007), "librarians have a role in collecting, preserving, and making accessible materials needed by those doing genealogical research and should know how to ascertain the skill level of their patrons." In terms of collection development, the guideline indicates:

Genealogy collections should include family histories and genealogies of local families; pedigrees and/or compilations of family group sheets of local families; vital records when available; federal and state census for the local community; probate and will records; land records; county, city, and state maps; cemetery records; information on local churches;

naturalization records; military records; local newspapers; county histories; and indexes to the preceding items. ... Collections should also include manuals and handbooks of how to do genealogy research. (RUSA, 1999)

To address community needs, the guideline (RUSA, 2006) further states "an assessment should be made concerning the ethnic background and countries of origin of the members of the community served by the library in order to determine the scope of the genealogical collection." Besides above-mentioned responsibilities and concerns, such as subject-focused training for librarians, collection management, and community needs, other areas for consideration include providing reference services, legal research, personnel, access, preservation, and fiscal considerations for genealogy services.

This paper summarized the author's findings of research on Yuan Shikai's family history and the genealogical records of the Yuan clan. Besides tracing the Yuan genealogical history from its earliest recorded ancestry to current Yuan descendants, the author also provided insights into the traditional Chinese family structure, rankings of successive generations, and polygamy practices. The prevalent social and political forces in late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century that impacted on the rise and fall of the family were also analyzed. Further explorations of the subject, including oral histories of contemporary descendants, the political instability that impacted upon different family members, the influence of Yuan family background on the descendants, as well as variations in the extended family structure in different parts of the world will be examined in greater detail and published in the forthcoming book.

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