Bridging the gap between cultural heritage and research--a case study of the Chinese Genealogy Knowledge Service platform

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Outline

Cultural heritage data in library

- Genealogy data
- Stories in GLAMs

Bakhtin’ s theory of chronotope

The Chinese Genealogy Knowledge Service Platform at Shanghai Library

- Data used, research process, functions
- How it supports research
- What we have achieved and the challenges

Cultural heritage data in library

"Culture is a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of a society or a social group" (UNESCO)

- Books and manuscripts
- Photographs
- Audiovisual materials
- Genealogy materials, stone inscriptions & other forms of human knowledge

Stories in GLAMs

GLAM institutions:

- Repositories for the human record and creativity
- Collections of various forms of human narrative
- Need appropriate ways to fully present, reconstruct, and disseminate those ‘stories’
- Stories are important elements of cultural heritage[1]

Digital Turn

Methodological and epistemological shift in GLAMs (Barber, 2016; Daković, 2021)

‘Storytelling’ to ‘Digital storytelling’

[1] https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-cultural-rights/history-and-memorialisation-narratives-about-past-examined-through-lens-cultural-rights

Genealogy data

Genealogy book: record of family names and members (traditionally males) since the Western Zhou Dynasty (Chinese: 西周; c. 1045 – 771 BC)

- A valuable source to understand family history: how families grow, immigrations, big events, celebrities in the family, etc.
- An evidence of social history: events recorded in family history are also events in that area at that time (wars, population policy, etc.)
- A material to educate later generations: instructions recorded on the genealogy book

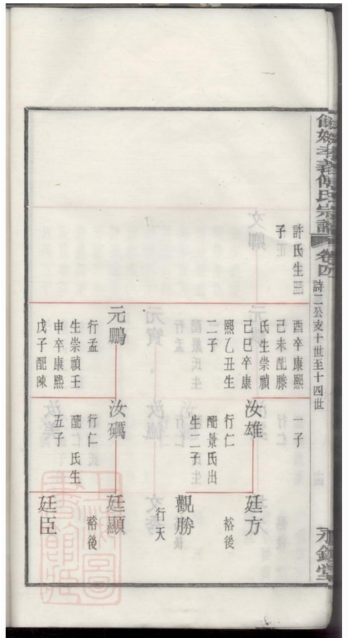


Fig. A digitized image of a genealogy book

Genealogy stories towards research:

- Family dynamics and social structures over time
- Patterns of migration and settlement

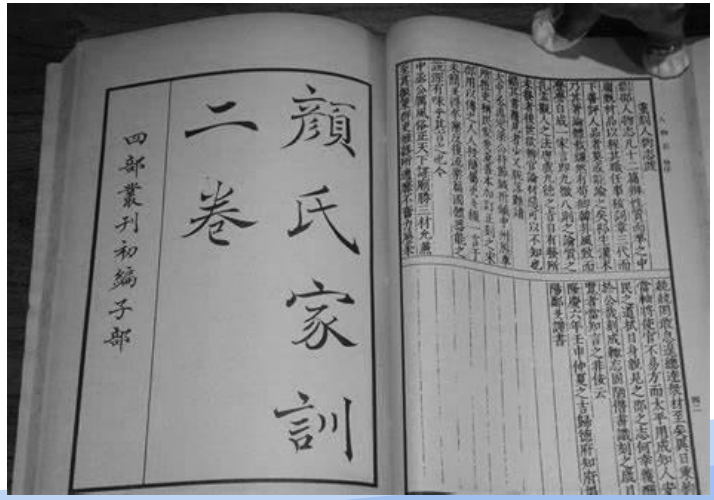


Fig. Image of Family Yan’s instruction

Bakhtins theory of chronotope

Narrative time-space continuum in the context of cultural heritage resources

“Chronotope”：

- relationship between time and space in literature
- a specific way of organizing time and space within the narrative
- shapes the way the characters interact with each other and with their environment. It reflects the cultural and historical context in which the work was created

Application:

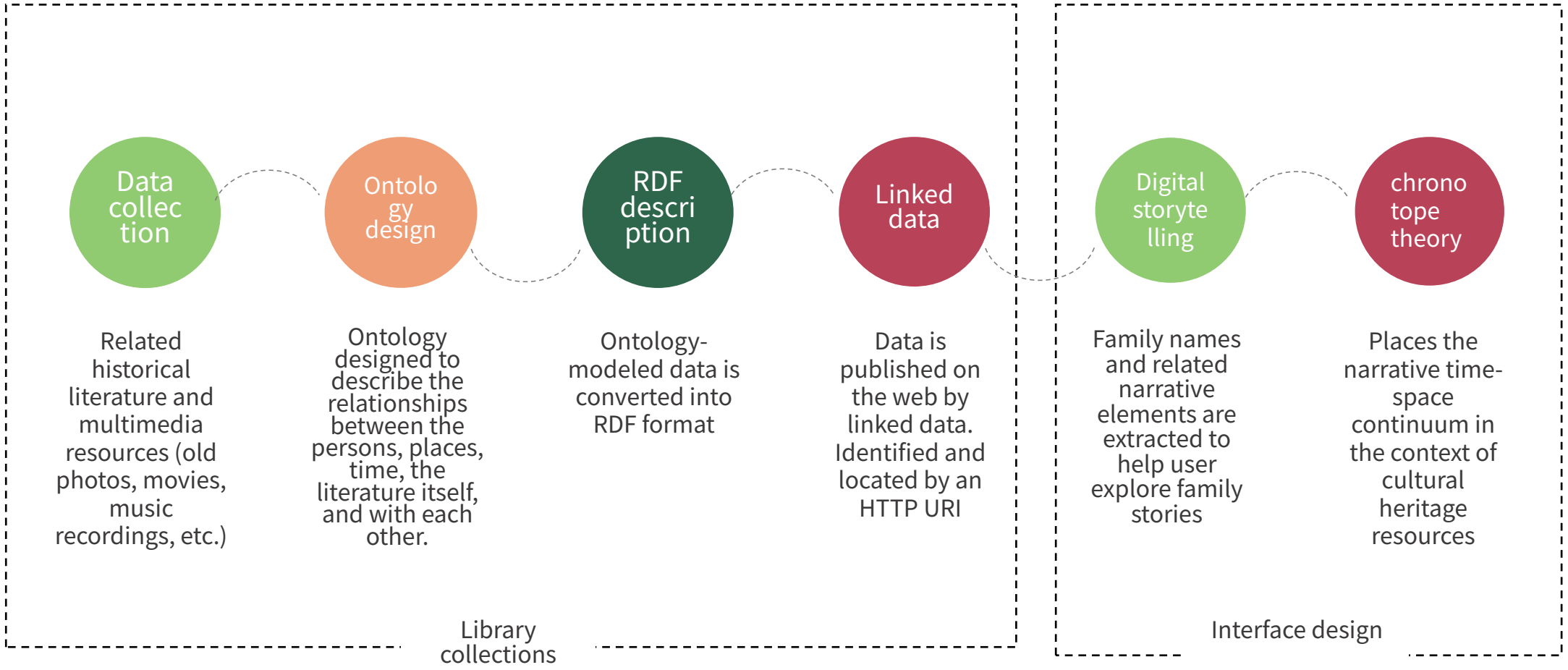
- analyze the ways in which cultural practices and discourses are shaped by the temporal and spatial contexts in which they occur
- provides a framework for analyzing the complex relationships between time, space, and culture

The Chinese Genealogy Knowledge Service Platform

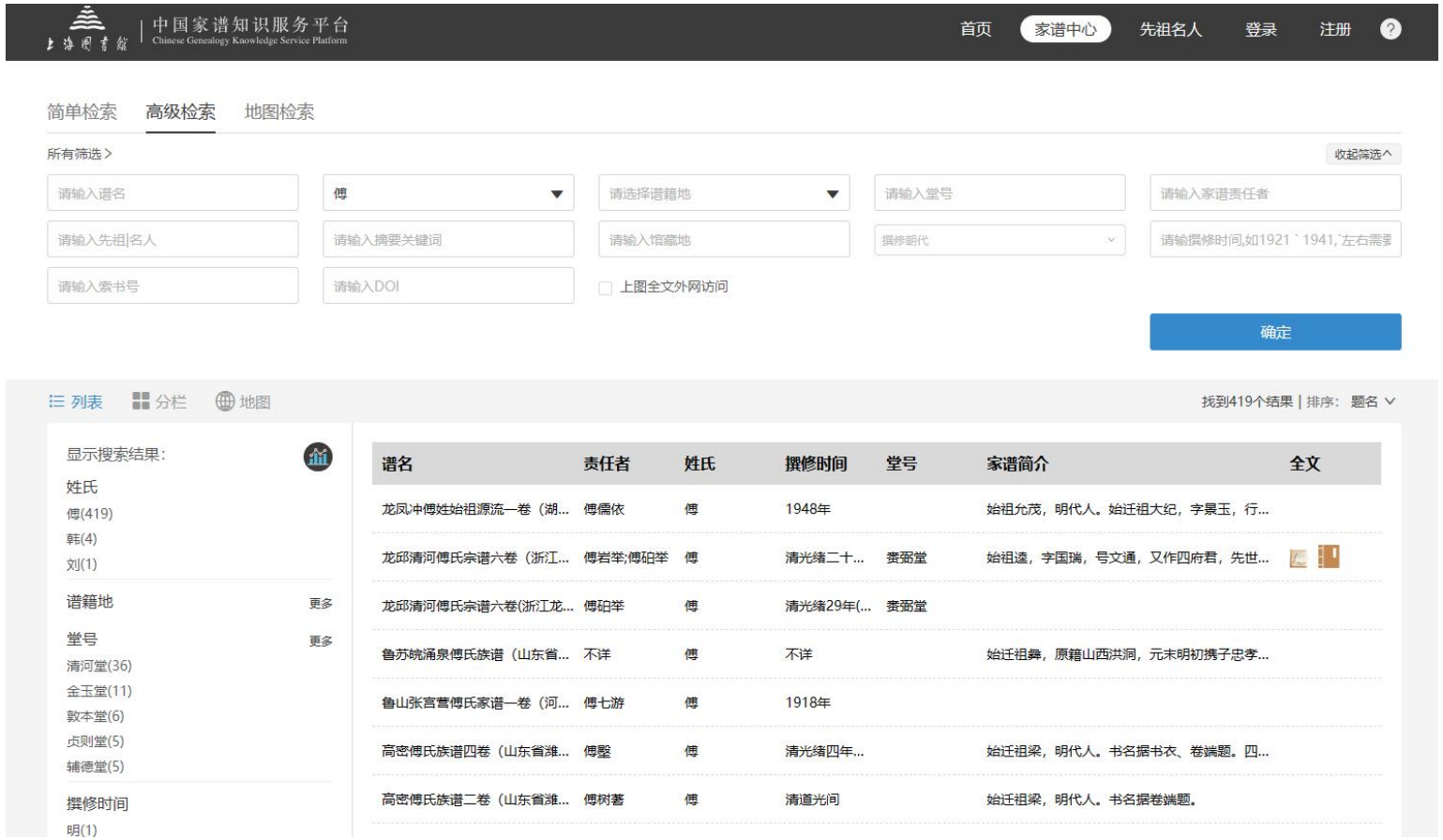
- around 70,000 entries
- event ontology designed
- more than 100,000 migration events
- spanning more than 3,000 years

https://jiapu.library.sh.cn/

Research process and research methods



Functions



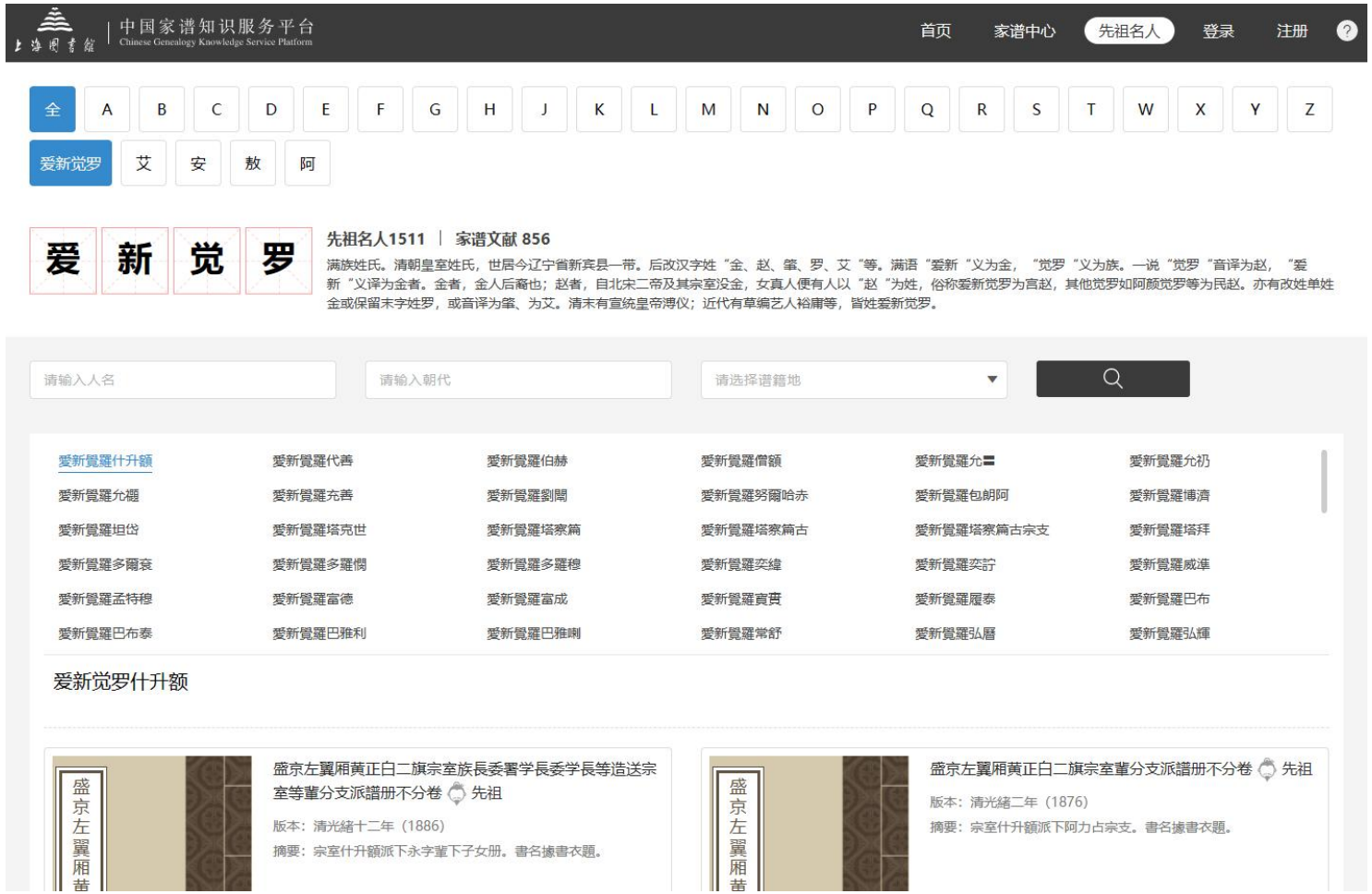
Search and refine function

Functions

上海图书馆
SHANGHAI LIBRARY
上海科学技术情报研究所
INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL INFORMATION OF SHANGHAI

View digital images with IIIF

Functions



Explore celebrities by family name

Project website

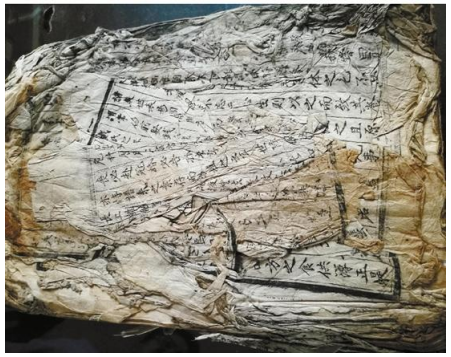
上海图书馆
SHANGHAI LIBRARY
上海科学技术情报研究所
INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL INFORMATION OF SHANGHAI

How it supports research

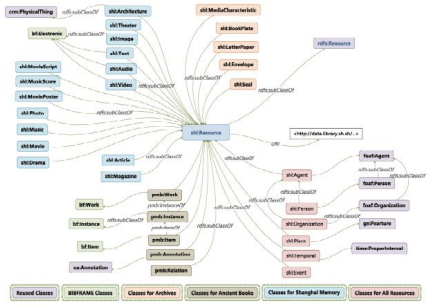
Genealogy materials scattered around

Build ontology and extract entity

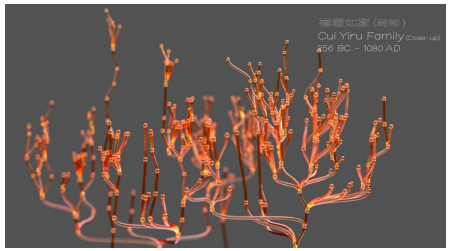
Used in multiple contexts (targeted research, open data product design, art design etc.)



Repair, preserve & digitize



Build platform to support browsing, retrieval and research



Diverse research context

Fig. Website of the 8th Shanghai Library Open Data Contest (https://opendata.library.sh.cn/)

Fig. Open data SHL provides (More than 150 million), Genealogy data (More than 89,000 items)

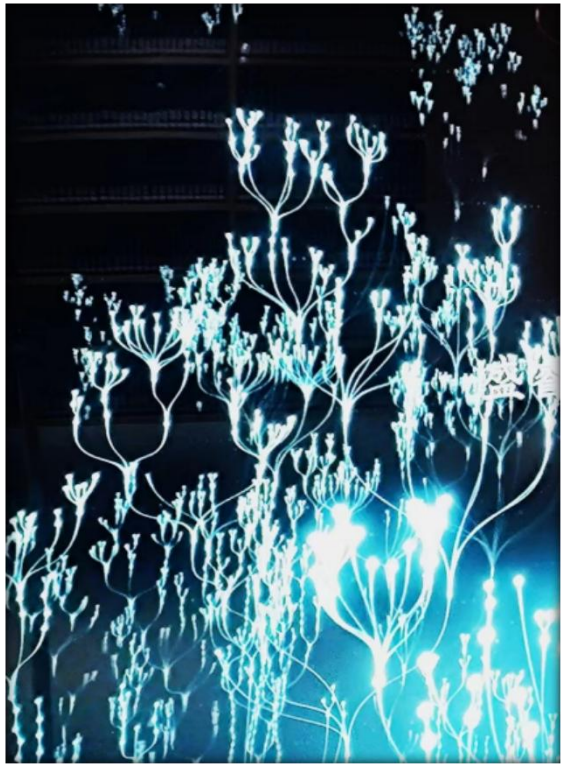


Fig. Family tree design by Xiangfan which used SHL genealogy data

Journal of Open Humanities Data

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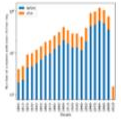

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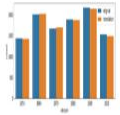

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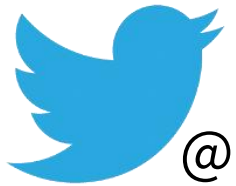
The Journal of Open Humanities Data

- Launched in 2015; open access and peer-reviewed
- Fastest growing data journal for humanities research
- 83 articles published so far
- Vision: be a key part of a thriving community of scholars sharing humanities data
- Two publication types

  Short data papers (1000 words): descriptions of datasets with high reuse potential
  Full-length research papers (3000-5000 words): discussion of methods, challenges, and limitations in the creation, collection, management of humanities data
- Editor-in-chief: Barbara McGillivray (King’ s College London)
- Submission guidelines: https://openhumanitiesdata.metajnl.com/about/submissions/



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open scholarship

To close

Currently:

- we have library users exploring their own family history
- some research context, such as open data contest each year

But...

- challenge is to facilitate more collaborations with researchers
- need to find diverse research context to explore the value in the genealogy data
- for the librarians to work closely with researchers in supporting their research journey

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Thank you!

The Chinese Genealogy Knowledge Service Platform:
https://jiapu.library.sh.cn/

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