What is in a Jiapu? Numbered below are images taken from the Chinese Collection of Genealogies. Here I have attempted to describe what information is contained in each and how to read them.

1. The Title page

Jiang family 姜姓 clan genealogy 族譜,

Dated: 18th year of Guang xu 光绪 period of the Qing dynasty, sixty cycle year of “renchen 壬辰.”

This genealogy is for the Tianshuitang 天水堂 Jiang clan 姜姓. Tianshui 天水 is the name of the “Tanghao 堂號” or lineage organization that the Jiang family belongs to.
Prefaces are found in this genealogy of the Songyang 松陽 village, Lai family 頼氏 beginning with a major revision of the clan’s genealogies beginning in the 38th year of the Republic of China 民國, with prefaces extending back through Guangxu 光緒, Tongzhi 同治, Daoguang 道光, Jiaqing 嘉慶 and Qianlong 乾隆 periods of the Qing Dynasty 清朝.
Table of Contents with prefaces concerning Lai family genealogy revisions extending from the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty dating back to the Yanyou period of the Yuan Dynasty (1314-1320 AD) and the Xianchun period of the Song Dynasty 1265-1274 AD.
3. This is a portrait of the shizu founding ancestor Jing 璟 of this particular Guo 郭 clan 氏. The character 公 is an honorific that follows the name of the first ancestor in this case Jing gong 璟公. In the pedigrees and genealogical tables all members of a clan will descend from him, he being the first generation.
4. This is a Chen clan pedigree chart with clan members descending down to the 7\textsuperscript{th} generation with a few 8\textsuperscript{th} and 9\textsuperscript{th} generation names listed from the founding ancestor. He started with three sons. Note that in the third generation the sons were all given the same first given name 天, probably commencing the use of a generation naming chart. We see the naming chart being used in subsequent generations.
5. Here we see a similar pedigree chart (shixi 世系) with members of a Chang clan (昌氏) descending from a common ancestor nine generations as indicated on the left. Note how the clan is closely following the generation name chart.
6. This is a generation table 世系圖 descending from the founding ancestor. Note the title to the right, the name of the founding ancestor, Liang yi and his descendants (Bi san, Zong yi, Qian yi and Liu liu), the generation (first through fifth), time period (Song), wife and sons of each and the descendancy flow shown by the arrows.
7. This is a Qu family branch Generation table starting with the first descendant Yi zhuan (son of Jun 儂—handsome, of outstanding talent) who lived during the Chenghua period (1465-1488) of the Ming dynasty. The genealogy descends three more generations providing information on his descendants (Zi, Ang xiao, and Bi shen). This is what is known as a horizontal record in which names descend from top to bottom (page by page). It is known as the Ouyang 欧阳 style of record after Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 who created it during the Song dynasty 宋朝. Here Generation tables 世系表 provide vital genealogical information such as birth 生, death 卒 or 殁, and burial 葬 and the surname of wife(s) 配,娶, or 妣 and the number of sons 子 and their given names 名字.
8. Here we have a Shi family genealogical table beginning with Da ren and his wife of the Li clan in the 18th generation. He was born in the 33rd year of the Kangxi period of the Qing dynasty the Jia xu year 8th month 24th day between 3 and 5 in the afternoon. He died in the 40th year of the Qianlong period of the Qing dynasty and so on. This is a vertical file, the descendants read from right to left (page by page) as indicated by the arrows rather from top to bottom. This is sometimes referred to as the “imperial style” because it one of the formats of the imperial genealogy.
9. This is a generation name chart (bei fen zi 較分字 or ming pai 名派) of a Chen family. The chart prescribes the first name to be used for each generation of heirs descending from the founding ancestor. Often a poem, this particular image begins with name designated for the 16th generation ending with the 47th. It is very helpful in following and locating ancestors within a clan/family.