The China Biographical Database project (CBDB) has opened the *beta* version of its crowd-sourcing platform for identifying social associations. The CSA, Crowdsourcing System for Association Data, currently is devoted to Ming dynasty letters.

In collaboration with the Center for Chinese Studies 漢學研究中心, we are including all the letter titles found in all known extant literary collections for 1650 Ming dynasty writers. There are currently over 10000 letters listed, mainly the mid-Ming; the remainder will appear as processed.

The purpose of the CSA platform is to enable scholars to find letter exchanges by author, recipient, or title and to contribute their knowledge about letter exchanges. The addressees of a minority of letters have already been done. The identifications will remain available on this platform and will be included in future releases of the China Biographical Database.

Our hope is that scholars working on individual historical figures will contribute such identifications as they can, to the benefit of all. CBDB has already identified recipients for over 7000 letters from the Song and Yuan periods.

> Register at the platform website: https://csa.cbdb.fas.harvard.edu
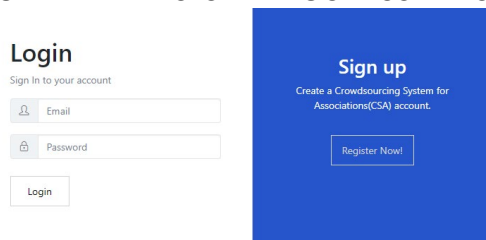> You will find further guidance on using the platform, in English and Chinese, at:
> English https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/cbdb/files/crowdsourcing_platform.pdf
> Chinese https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/cbdb/files/crowdsourcing_platform_cn.pdf

The Crowdsourcing System for Association Data was developed and is maintained by the CBDB open source community. We are currently using it to collect the social association data from letters in Ming Dynasty. However, it can be used for many kinds of social associations and it will be possible for users to upload a list to this system to create their own social association projects for any dynasty.

TO ENTER THE SYSTEM YOU MUST FIRST REGISTER

The interface
We have prepopulated fields for:
> Authors 作者
> Letter titles 作品標題
> The kind of association 通訊關係
> The title of the collection where the letter will be found 文集
> The CBDB text code for the collection 出處
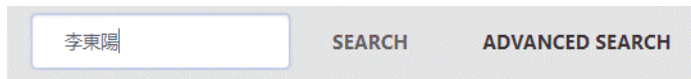> The *juan* number where the letter appears 卷

If the collection provides the data then the following fields are usually prepopulated:
> The number of letters to that person 通訊次數
> The dating of the letter: the Western year 通訊年份, reign period 年號, reign period year 年, dating
> accuracy code 時限

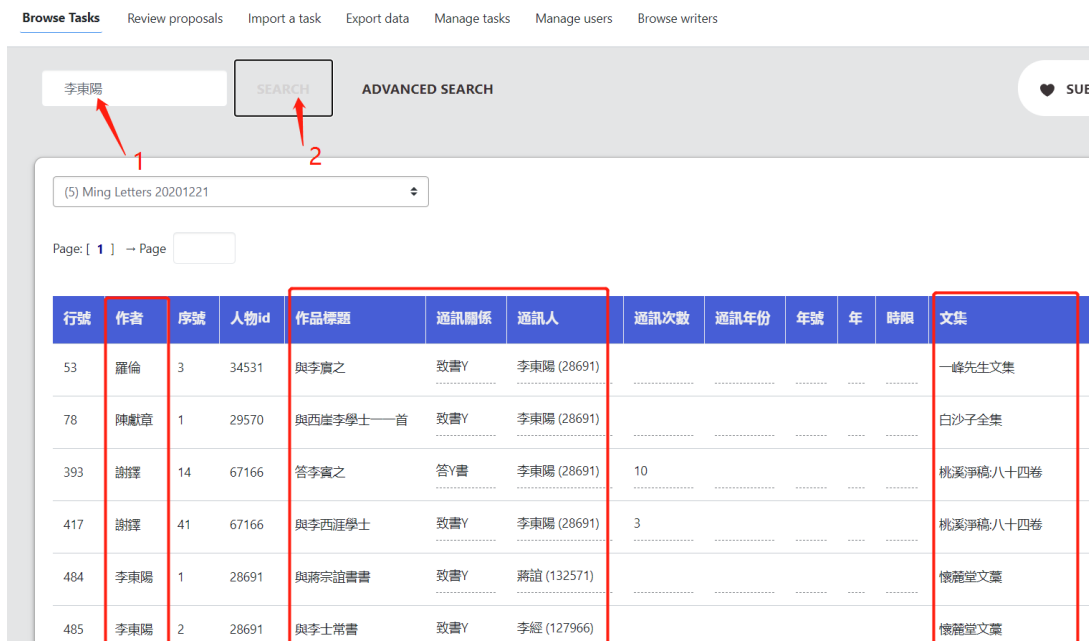The addressee field is discussed below 通訊人

1. Simple Search

For simple search, enter the name of a person, letter title, or collection in the search box.
Searching a person returns both authors and addressees.

2. Advanced Search

In advanced search, you can select multiple fields: author 作者, title of the piece 作品標題, kind of association 通訊關係, and name of the collection 文集.

For example, entering the search term 學 will return all letters addressed to 學士 and letter titles that include the phrase 論學.
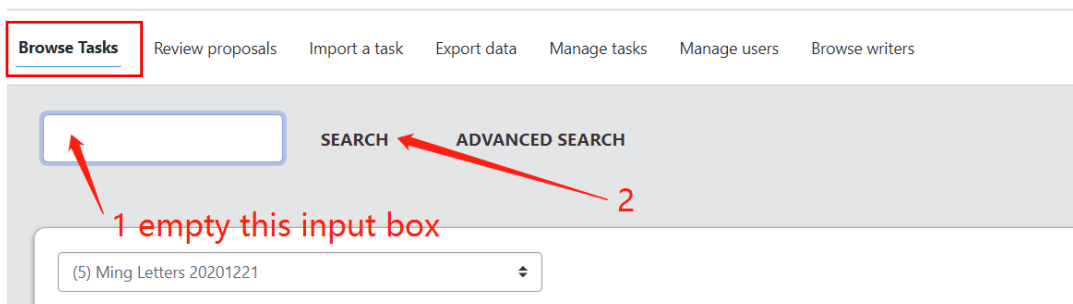
To return to the original list, either click Browse Tasks or do a search on an empty search box.

How to enter the name of a letter recipient

The goal of this project is accumulate identifications of persons in letter networks. Here we explain, first, how the platform was populated prior to opening to the public and, second, how you can add names of addressees.

1. How were addressees prepopulated?

For example, line 74 與劉顯仁書二首. Rarely is a letter addressed to someone by proper name, although editors sometimes added the proper name. In this case 顯仁 is a courtesy name 字. It was discovered with the following procedure: a) The 字 and 號 of all Ming figures in the CBDB database were combined with all possible 姓. A match was found between 劉顯仁 and 劉忠 (with the CBDB ID 199212). b) The dates of the author 羅倫 and addressee overlapped and the native place was the same.

73	羅倫	23	34531	與張廷芳書	致書Y	
74	羅倫	24	34531	與劉顯仁書二首	致書Y	劉忠 (199212)
75	羅倫	25	34531	與何惟一	致書Y	

2. How to identify an addressee?

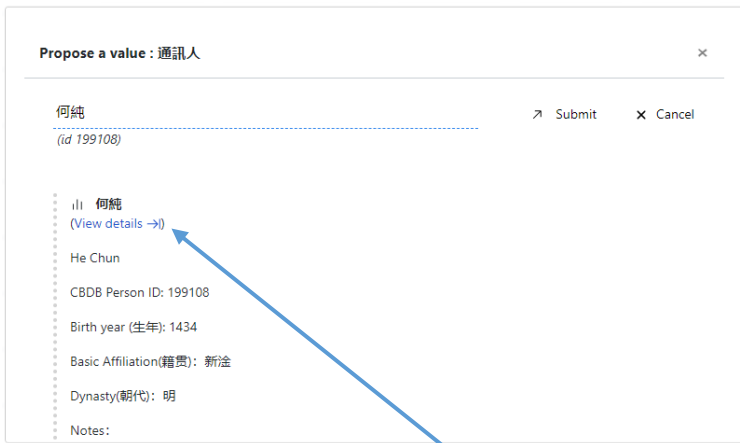For example, line 75 與何惟一

If you know who 何惟一 is:

Let us assume you have done research on 羅倫 and his circle and immediately recognize that 何惟一 is 何純 (CBDB ID 199108), who passed the 進士 in 1466, the same year as 羅倫, and came from 新淦 in the same province of 江西.

In this case you click on the blank space and call up the following screen and enter the name

Propose a value : 通訊人   ×

何純

↗ Submit   ✗ Cancel

Suggest this as a new person

何純佑 (42183)

何純 (199108)

涂氏(何純母) (231333)

陳氏(何純妻) (231344)

何純 (308037)

何純 (315008)

There are three 何純. If you select the first, ID 199108, you will see the following screen.

If you are not sure, click on "view details" to go to the CBDB inputting page to see what information is currently in the database. As below:
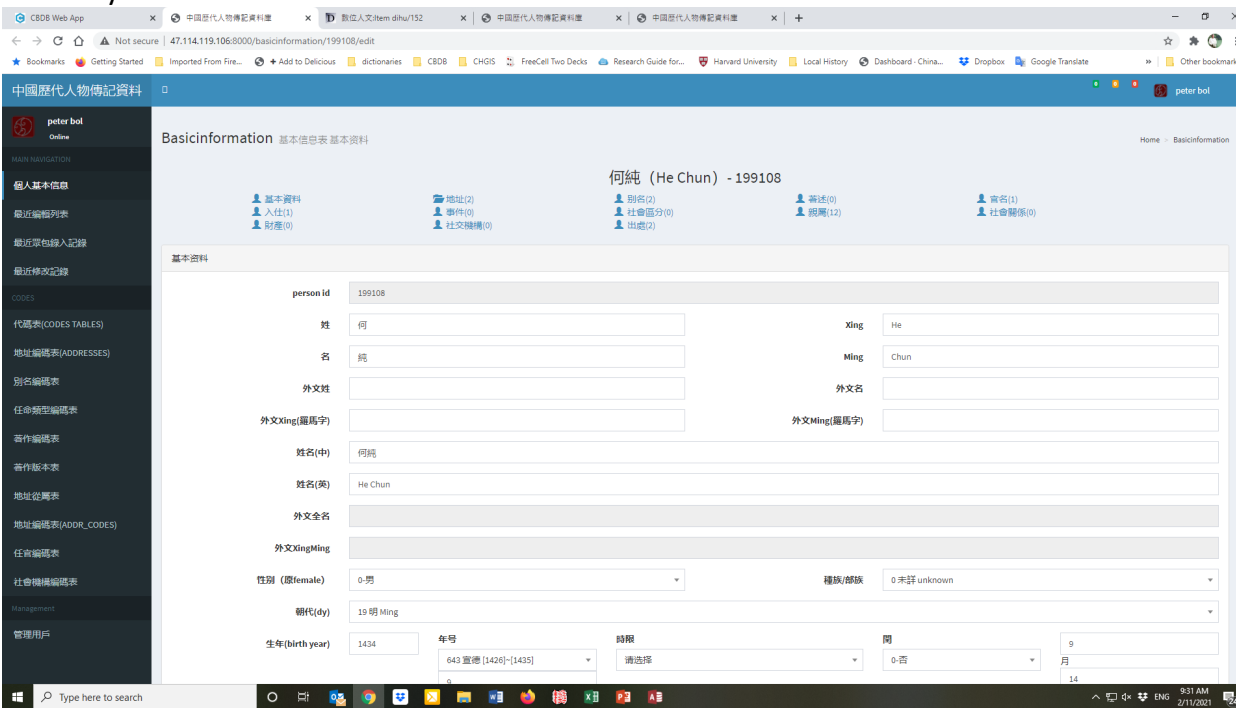
Once you know that 何純, ID 199108, is your target, click submit. The data is entered. After you finished all your inputs **please click the "SUBMIT PROPOSALS" at the top right to submit all your revisions.**

The system will then show a pop-up with all the inputs you have made and give you a chance to review. If you are satisfied simply click "Submit."

Behind the scenes it goes to an editorial group that reviews the identification before incorporating permanently.

Suppose, however, that the correct 何純 is not in CBDB? You can enter the name and click "Suggest this as a new person."

<u>If you do not know who 何惟一 is and want to find out:</u>
The issue is finding a 何 whose 字 is 惟一 and then finding that person in CBDB (or, if not there, entering the name of the person and clicking "Suggest new person").

Since CBDB regularly adds large numbers of persons, it may make sense to search the CBDB stand-alone MS Access database, which allows search by 名 or 別名 as below.
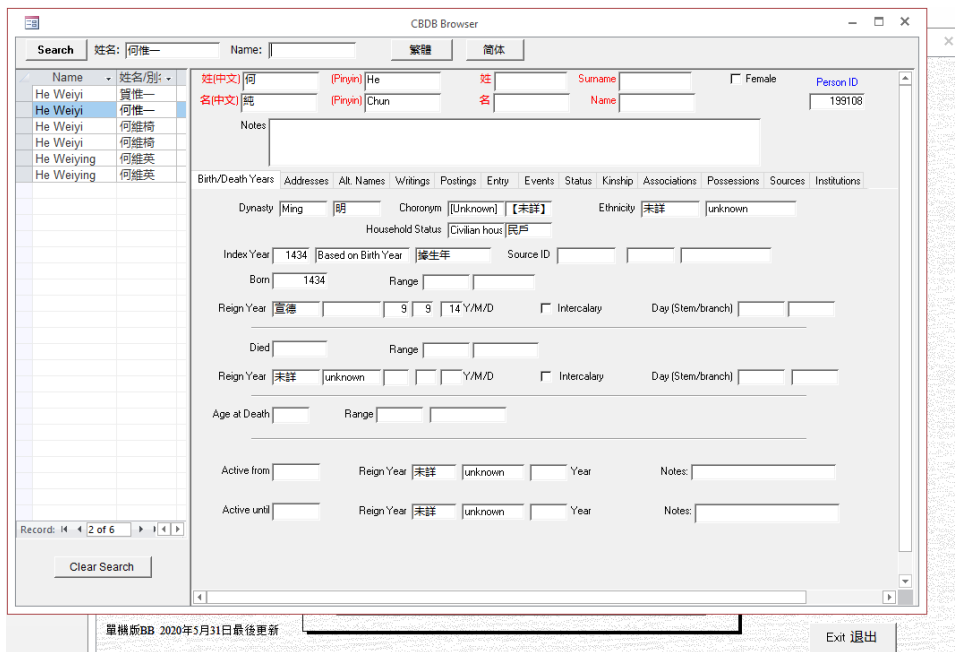
This does not help with cases of 姓+官名. At present CBDB is preparing the addition of a large number of office titles for Ming and Qing persons. Once that is accomplished there will be some help.