

The marriage scroll  
of Lee Seng Kooi  
& Tan Cheng Beow

Written by

Sim Lee

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Name

/home/detlev/sim/marriage\_scroll.doc

## Document History

Date	Change / Comment
21 August 2007	Looked up the meanings of the individual characters to produce the detailed translation.
22 August 2007	Footnoted information on character variants and simplified vs. traditional forms.
24 August 2007	Added the idiomatic translation for each line, in the detailed translation. Added an explanation of the layout and approach used in the detailed translation.
25 August 2007	Added photographs, pre-printed graphic elements & explanation thereof, and the characters as laid out in the scroll (the 'transcription of the characters'). Added an introduction to the entire document, giving some background information and describing the physical characteristics of the scroll. Described the structure of document in text.
26 August 2007	Added a title page with initial document history.
27 August 2007	Successfully matched the Chinese and Western dates given in the scroll.
29 August 2007	Interpreted lines 8 & 9 based on information from chat on <a href="http://www.unilang.org">www.unilang.org</a> .
1 September 2007	Added a section with the idiomatic translation, separate from the idiomatic translations in the detailed translation.
2 September 2007	Made the detailed translation into an appendix. Added an appendix showing close-up of the smaller characters in column 29.
4 September 2007	Correctly transcribed characters 24.02 & 28.01. Added an appendix with lunar calendar for 1923.
5 September 2007	Incorporated Duaaagiii's translation.
6 September 2007	Incorporated Duaaagiii's suggested amended characters.
8 September 2007	Added a real table of contents, to replace the description of the structure of document in text.
10 September 2007	Incorporated Duaaagiii's detailed explanations.
13 September 2007	Added thanks to the Minnan Forum contributors.
14 September 2007	Added close-ups of alternative and non-existent forms found on the scroll to one of the appendices.
27 September 2007	Added an appendix of alternative and amended forms for the character text of the scroll.
8 December 2007	Added cultural and family background, and history of the scroll, to the introduction. Added a conclusion with a discussion of the outstanding issues. Updated the document history to show all significant stages in the development of the document. Added an appendix showing the obscure form of 時.
13 February 2008	Last updates before publishing on the internet.

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## Introduction

This document describes and attempts to analyse a scroll in which the impending marriage of my grandfather Lee Seng Kooi (李成貴) to my grandmother Tan Cheng Beow (陳清妙) is spoken about.

## **Physical characteristics**

- The scroll consists of a single sheet approximately 59 cm long by 22 cm high, with a wooden “staff” attached to each of the left-hand and right-hand edges. The left-hand staff has “knobs” of bone or ivory on each end. It would appear that the sheet could be rolled up around either of the two staves, probably the left one.
- The sheet appears to be of a standard printed format - for the most part a bright red rectangular area, with motifs of a sun, dragons, clouds, mountains, flowers and fruit, and certain Chinese characters. These motifs are pre-printed *on* the red rectangular area, around the perimeter. Within the borders formed by these motifs are 30 pre-printed columns, in which Chinese text has been hand-written with a Chinese writing brush, in black ink. The colour of the pre-printed motifs and columns may or may not have faded in the course of time, but they are presently of a light bronze/copper colour.
- All around the bright red rectangular area is a beige-coloured border. On part of this border, fine greenish-blue threads are present. This results in the following structure: the large central red area, a narrow beige border, then a greenish-blue border, and finally a very narrow beige border again.

These features can be seen in the photographs included in this document (see below).

## **Cultural and family background**

The marriage took place in 1923. The families of the bride and groom were both long-established, English-educated, Penang Baba Chinese (Hokkien) families. The groom, born in 1899, was English-educated to the end of secondary school, and the bride, born in 1901, was English-educated to some level of primary school. They functioned completely adequately in Hokkien, but all their reading and writing - in business and in their personal lives (letters to one another, to their siblings and cousins, and with their children; recreational reading; etc) - was done in English. Neither of them spoke or understood any Mandarin, and, as far as is known, neither of them had any exposure to formal lessons in Chinese. All of this would have been a very normal pattern for people of that cultural background, and of that period in time.

As such, for the period of the 1920's to 1940's, no one in the family of the bride and groom's generation knew more than 20-50 characters of very basic Chinese (e.g. mah-jong tiles, *perhaps* the characters of their own name, the occasional shop name, etc). It was only from the 1940's onwards, after the children and nephews and nieces of the bride and groom had gone to school, that *some* of these children took Chinese as a subject at secondary school level. Even then, 1) only very few of the children did this, and 2) the level of Chinese attained was only that of elementary Chinese anyway - sufficient to pass the Higher School Certificate subject of “Chinese Language” (within the English education system). In any case, there still wouldn't have been sufficient knowledge of Chinese within the family to understand (even very vaguely) the contents of the scroll. It was only even later - when some of the children and grandchildren of the bride and groom had married either Chinese-educated individuals or English-educated individuals with a Chinese-educated family background - that there was sufficient knowledge of Chinese within the extended family for a start to be made to understanding the contents of the scroll.

So, for very many years, within my family, it was believed that the scroll was the *marriage contract* between Lee Seng Kooi (李成貴, the groom) and Tan Cheng Beow (陳清妙, the bride). In the 1980's, when approximate translations were made by various members of the extended family, it was believed that the text concerned the *proposal of marriage*, made by Lee Seng Kooi's uncle - Lee Choon Kheng (李俊卿) - to Tan Cheng Beow's father - Tan Hong Lim (陳芳霖), on behalf of the two younger people. In fact, a study of the text - as discussed in this document - now indicates that it may have been more an *expression of thanks* made by Lee Choon Kheng to Tan Hong Lim, for the fact that the proposal of marriage had been accepted by the latter and his family.

I believe that the reason Lee Seng Kooi's uncle plays this role is that both of Lee Seng Kooi's parents were no longer alive at this stage.

## History of the scroll

After the marriage in 1923, the scroll was kept - as far as I have been able to determine - in a drawer of a bedroom cupboard. Most of their children didn't even know of the existence of the scroll in their childhood.

Lee Seng Kooi passed away in 1956, and Tan Cheng Beow in 1978. After that, the scroll was in the possession of their second daughter, who brought it from Malaysia to Australia when she migrated there in 1987. It was in the 1980's that early attempts were made at translating the scroll into English. Two relatives by marriage with considerable knowledge of Chinese provided idiomatic translations, but some of the literary and cultural allusions escaped them. In 1988, the scroll was restored by a professional art restoration company, at the cost of A\$450. After this, it was framed, and now hangs in the living room of the home of the eldest son of the eldest son of the bride and groom. Prior to the translation provided in this document, a further translation (into modern Chinese) was done by a teacher of Chinese, in around 2000 or 2001<sup>1</sup>.

## My thanks

The two translations made by members of the extended family - W.S. Hon of Brisbane and K.T. Li of Hong Kong - were very helpful in my initial attempts to understand the scroll. Furthermore, I am very grateful to Mark Yong and Duaaagiii of the Minnan Forum (main site [www.chineselanguage.org](http://www.chineselanguage.org) or alternatively, directly at [www.chineselanguage.org/forums/viewforum.php?f=6](http://www.chineselanguage.org/forums/viewforum.php?f=6)) for their further help in the deciphering and translation of the Chinese text. In particular, Duaaagiii's sharing with me of his knowledge of Chinese culture and Classical Chinese enabled me to understand references and sentences which would have otherwise remained completely cryptic and impenetrable. Many of the additional explanations in Appendix 1 were provided by him. Lastly, my uncle C.T. Lee of Sydney, Detlev Hauschildt of Amsterdam, and K.H. Tan of Penang were willing listeners and gave me the opportunity to share my discoveries and bounce my ideas with them. To them too, many thanks.

## Request for feedback

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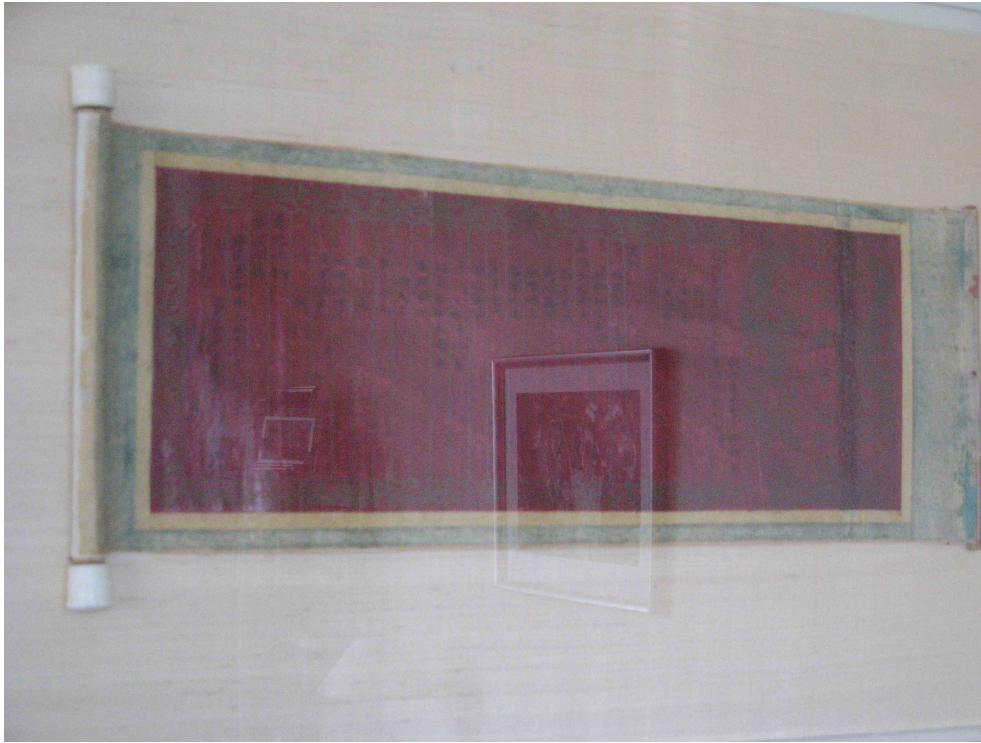
<sup>1</sup> She was not a member of the extended family, but instead the Chinese teacher of the eldest son of the bride and groom (he took up Chinese later in life, after his retirement).

I would be very grateful for feedback relating to anything which has been written in this analysis, for example: improvements to or corrections of the transcription and/or translation. In particular, I would be very happy to hear if any readers are aware of similar scrolls: just of their very *existence*, or any other more detailed information would be most welcome.

Please send feedback to: [simhistory@gmail.com](mailto:simhistory@gmail.com) .

Photographs of the scroll

Entire scroll - the main red area, white, greenish-blue, and white borders, staves and knobs can be seen.

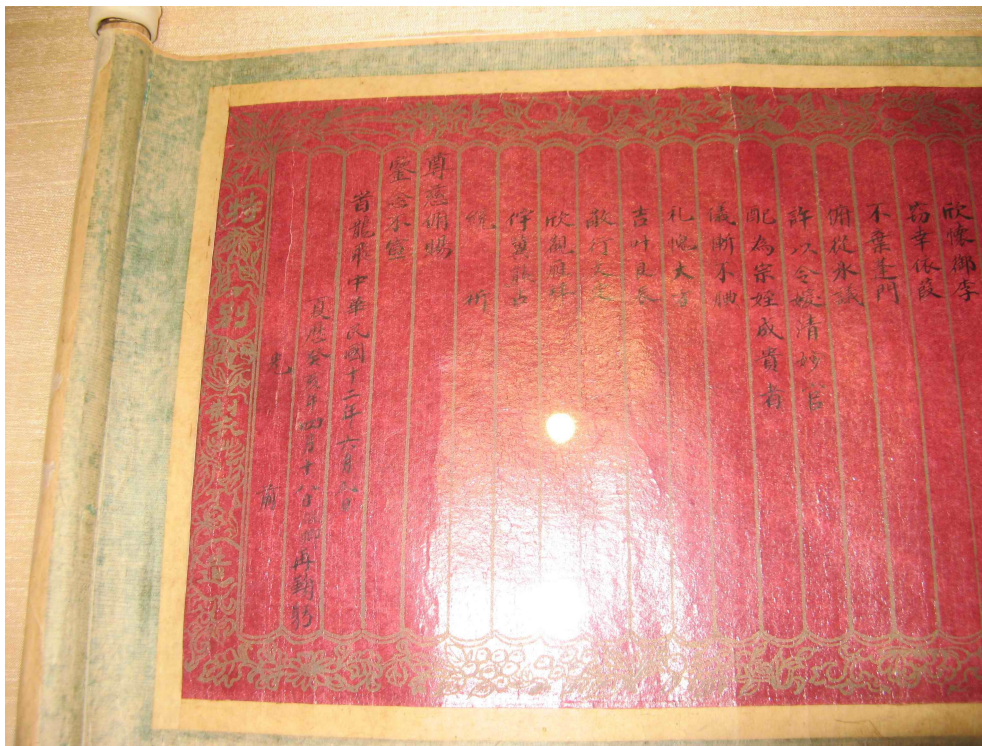


Right half - the pre-printed motifs and the rightmost handwritten columns can be seen.





Left half - the pre-printed motifs and the leftmost handwritten columns can be seen.

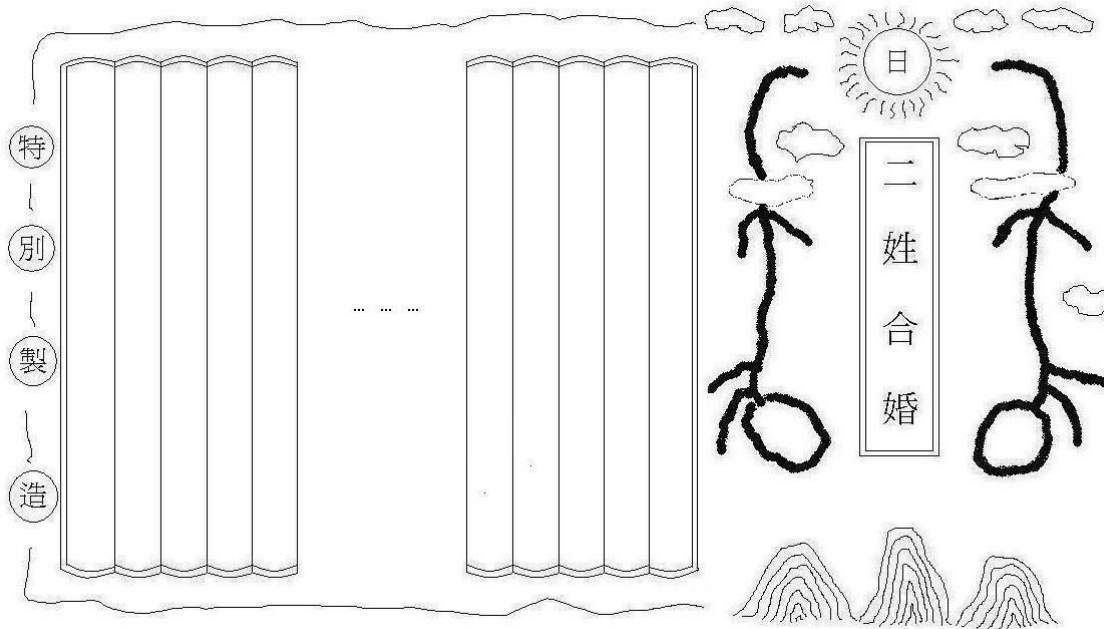


Detail of left-hand staff and knob at the bottom end - the greenish-blue threads forming the border can be seen.

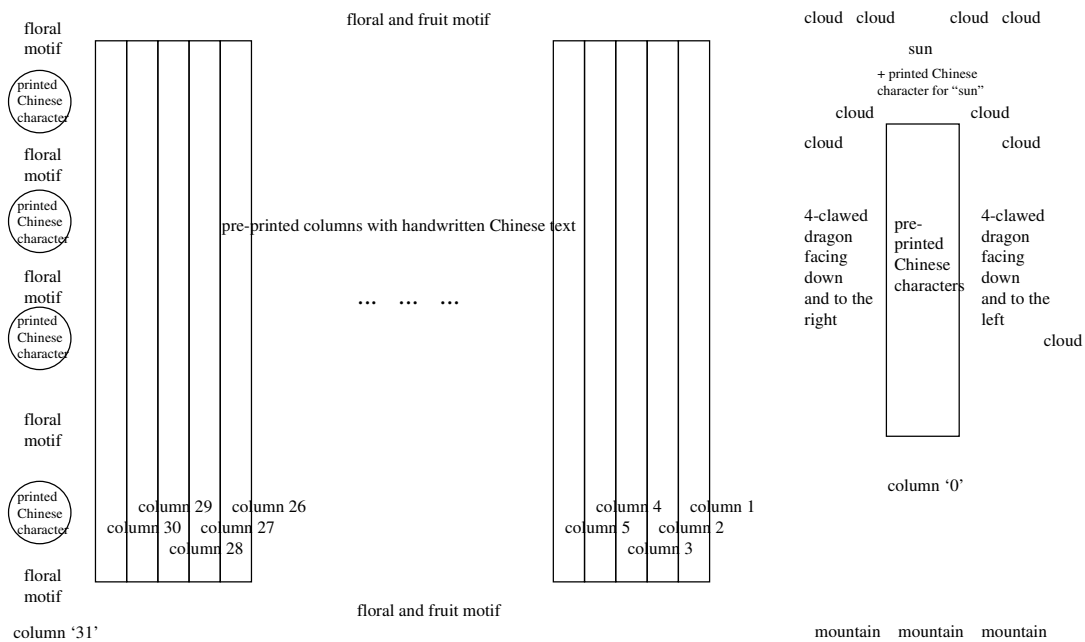


# Pre-printed graphical elements

Image:



Description:



## Transcription of the characters

The Chinese characters (both pre-printed and handwritten) of the scroll are illustrated below. The numbers in grey indicate the column numbers, and are (of course) not present in the original. They have been added for ease of reference, particularly to facilitate comparison to the idiomatic translation.

Notes on the text:

- Conforming to tradition, the text starts at the top right, reading downwards in columns, and reading the columns from right to left.
- Column 0 and column 31 are not handwritten, but are part of the pre-printed design of the scroll.
- The pre-printed Chinese character “日” in column 0 is contained within the pre-printed sun motif and will be treated solely as a graphical element. Hence - in contrast to the other 8 pre-printed Chinese characters (“二姓合婚” in column 0, and “特別製造” in column 31) - it will not be translated.
- Columns 2, 7, 10, 26 and 27 are two characters higher than most of the main text of the scroll. This raising is done as a mark of respect, and is explained in more detail in Appendix 1 - the detailed translation, in the detailed explanation of line 7.
- Similarly, column 1 is much lower than the main text of the scroll, expressing the humility of the person writing the text.
- The first character in column 11 has a distinctly different form from that of the computer-compatible equivalent. See Appendix 3 for a close-up photograph of this character.
- The first character in column 24 appears to be a non-existent character, and may have been incorrectly written. See Appendix 3 for a close-up photograph of this character.
- Column 29 consists of 15 characters, but the 11th and 12th characters are slightly smaller, and written slightly offset to the right, making this column consist of 3 parts:

☐ The 1st to the 10th character.

☐ The 11th to the 12th character.

☐ The 13th to 15th character.

See Appendix 3 for a close-up photograph of this aspect of column 29.

日  
二  
姓  
合  
媿

恭姻眷弟李俊卿鞠躬  
大姻望陳府芳霖翁尊姻家老先生閣下

伏以

五世其昌

百年好合

恭惟

日門

接胡滿之令緒

衍敬仲之芳踪

尊姻家老先生

器宇宏深

威儀日潔

欣懷御李

窃幸依葭

不棄蓬門

俯從冰議

許以令媛清妙官

配為宗姪成貴者

儀慚不腆

礼愧大方

吉叶良辰

敬行文定

欣觀雁拜

佇冀熊占

統祈

尊慈俯賜

鑒念不宣

峇龍飛中華民國十二年六月式日  
夏曆癸亥年四月十八日 俊卿 再鞠躬  
光前

特  
別  
製  
造

## Idiomatic translation

The following is an idiomatic translation, slightly adapted from the one provided by Duaaagiii on the Minnan Forum. See Appendix 1 - the “detailed translation” - for how the individual characters (and their literal meanings) result in the idiomatic translation.

00	<b>A Marriage Between Two Families</b>	二姓合婚	00
01	Yours respectfully (literally: your younger brother through marriage), Lee Choon Kheng, bows	恭姻眷弟李俊卿鞠躬	01
02	[before] the honourable Mr. Tan Hong Lim	大姻望陳府芳霖翁尊姻家老先生閣下	02
03	wishing (literally: ‘lying prostrate in order to’ [say])	伏以	03
04	five generations of prosperity [and]	五世其昌	04
05	a harmonious union lasting a hundred years.	百年好合	05
06	I praise	恭惟	06
07	your esteemed family, [for]	高門	07
08	continuing the succession of the noble line of Hu Man, [and]	接胡滿之令緒	08
09	continuing the legacy of Jing Zhong, <sup>2</sup>	衍敬仲之芳踪	09
10	[as well as] your honourable self,	尊姻家老先生	10
11	whose bearing is dignified,	器宇宏深	11
12	awe-inspiring and virtuous,	威儀高潔	12
13	being in your presence is an honour	欣懷御李	13
14	and we delight that our humble family may be associated with your noble family (literally: ‘that reeds and rushes may lean against a jade tree’)	窃幸依葭	14
15	and that you did not reject our humble family,	不棄蓬門	15
16	and approved the marriage,	俯從水議	16
17	to betroth your daughter, Cheng Beow	許以令媛清妙官	17
18	to our nephew, Seng Kooi.	配為宗姪成貴者	18
19	Our gifts are humble,	儀慚不腆	19
20	our manners shamefully lacking.	礼愧大方	20
21	(We will choose) an auspicious date and time	吉叶良辰	21
22	to respectfully carry out the betrothal	敬行文定	22
23	I look forward to watching the marriage rituals	欣觀雁拜	23
24	and hope that they get a baby boy.	佇 <sup>2</sup> 冀熊占	24
25	I (also) beseech	統祈	25
26	your mother to condescend to grant	尊慈俯賜	26
27	her approval. I close at this point.	鑒念不宣	27
28	On the 2nd of June in the 12th year of the Republic of China (i.e. 2 June 1923)	崑龍飛中華民國十二年六月貳日	28
29	[that is,] on the 18th day of the 4th month, in the year of the 10th heavenly	夏曆癸亥年四月十八日	29

<sup>2</sup> Hu Man and Jing Zhong are famous historical figures, considered to be ancestors of people having the surname of Tan.

	stem and 12th earthly branch <sup>3</sup> , Choon Kheng bows again	俊卿 再鞠躬	
30	before your glorious self	光前	30
31	<b>Specially/custom made [for marriage contracts].</b>	特別製造	31

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<sup>3</sup> The equivalent date according to the Chinese lunar calendar. See Appendix 5 for details.

## Conclusion and outstanding issues

As a result of the study as described in this document, I feel that I now more or less understand the contents of the scroll.

There remain 6 areas which are a matter of some uncertainty to me. The first 4 concern the actual linguistic content of the scroll, and the last 2 concern the role the scroll played in its cultural / societal context.

1. The characters which were incorrectly written.
2. Whether the scroll might in fact be a proposal of marriage rather than an expression of thanks (after all).
3. The use of 官 for the bride (and 者 for the groom) in lines 17 & 18.
4. The “closing” of the scroll - specifically, line 27.
5. What the two people being married themselves thought of the scroll.
6. The wider role of such scrolls in the society of the time.

Each of these areas will be discussed below.

### **Incorrectly written characters**

In the analysis, 4 characters were considered to have been incorrectly written, and were amended. As there are only 30 handwritten lines in the scroll, this is more than one incorrectly written character every 8 lines, which seems rather excessive to me.

The 4 characters amended were:

Line 14, character 3: 依 → 兼

Line 17, character 4: 媛 → 嫵

Line 21, character 2: 叶 → 時

Line 24, character 1: 亅 + 宇 (= a non-existent character) → 伏

On the one hand: 1) The handwriting seems to be very professional, i.e. written by a person well versed in Chinese. 2) The scroll looks like it might have been rather expensive to make. 3) In only one of the four cases (嫵) does the amended character look very similar to the presumed incorrectly written character.

These points make me concerned that perhaps not all the amendments are appropriate. Could it be our unawareness of certain usages, which make us think that a character was incorrectly written? The character might be correctly written, and used in a very obscure combination, making us think that a different character was meant. Or the character may be a variant way of writing the word in mind, and we are unfamiliar with this variant. For example, the first character of line 28 - 崑 - would probably have been considered incorrectly written if Mark Yong of the Minnan Forum hadn't tracked it down (on a website giving the etymology of Chinese characters) as an alternative form of 時<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 1, at the detailed analysis of line 28, and also Appendix 4, for details.

On the other hand: 1) It is undeniably true that the character in line 24 is incorrectly written, as it doesn't exist<sup>5</sup>. 2) The writer might have been good at writing Chinese characters, but not very highly educated (i.e. in Classical Chinese). I could well imagine that the number of people highly educated in Classical Chinese in Penang in the 1920's might have been quite low. The writer might hence have merely been transferring a "standard text" (or a text composed by someone else) onto the scroll, without fully understanding the content or meaning, and may hence have made these mistakes in writing the characters. 3) The writer may have been transcribing from a (e.g. cursively) handwritten text, and the handwriting may have been very unclear at these spots, making the discrepancy between the original and amended character much less than might appear in the printed versions. 4) Perhaps we, in the modern age, accustomed to spelling checkers and electronic editing, expect a far lower rate of mistakes in text than was normal in an earlier age. For example, if the writer had written the text by hand up to (say) line 14, made a mistake, and *been very well aware of the mistake*, he may still not have felt much inclined to start again, with no certainty that he might not make another mistake at another point, earlier or later than line 14.

These points argue for the idea that the four characters were indeed correctly detected as incorrectly written, and that amending was appropriate.

### **“Proposal of Marriage” vs. “Expression of Thanks”**

There remains a slight uncertainty in my own mind as to whether the scroll might not be a proposal of marriage after all. The seed of the doubt is sown by lines 25 to 27, where “李俊卿 beseeches 陳芳霖’ s mother to grant her approval”. To me, this is slightly at odds with the idea that the marriage has been already agreed to by the bride’s father.

I offer here an alternative interpretation.

In the analysis, line 10 “尊姻家老先生” and the lines which follow are considered to be part of the “opening statement”, starting at line 1. That is to say, 陳芳霖 (the person addressed in the scroll) is seen as part of the object of the praising (恭惟) in line 6 - the other object of the praising being 陳芳霖’ s family (高門) in line 7.

However, the “opening statement” could be considered to *end* at line 9, with just 陳芳霖’ s family having been praised. Line 10 could then be the start of “new content”. As such, it could then be seen as a vocative: “尊姻家老先生” = “Dear Sir”, as it were. The “不棄蓬門” and “俯從冰議” of lines 15-16 could then be seen as a *request* to the bride’s family “not to reject 李俊卿’ s humble family” and “to approve the marriage”, rather than as an *acknowledgement* that the family hadn’t been rejected and the marriage had been approved. Such an interpretation would make the scroll a proposal of marriage rather than an expression of thanks.

This alternative explanation is being put forward only very tentatively, as I defer to others whose knowledge of Chinese is far greater than mine. I nevertheless offer it here, because of the slight “niggle” caused by lines 25 & 27, as already explained.

Perhaps it should also be added that in the balance, it still seems much more probable for the scroll to be an expression of thanks. The trouble and expense of commissioning such a scroll would seem to be warranted only if the marriage itself had already been agreed to.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1, at the detailed analysis of line 24, for details.



## The use of 官 for the bride (and 者 for the groom)

The word 官 “guan1” means “government official” (indeed “judge”, “magistrate”, in Hokkien, as in “kua~”), and seems (in line 17) to be a most unlikely word to use in connection with a young woman of that period <sup>6</sup>. In addition, there is some speculation as to whether the use of 者 for the groom in the immediately following line (line 18) might be a sort of “parallel” usage: 清妙官 and 成貴者. See the analysis of line 17 in “Appendix 1 - detailed translation” below.

The consensus of opinion is that this 官 (and 者) is usage which is now unfamiliar to us.

I speculate that the higher status of women in the (slightly more) matriarchal society of the Babas (where the man married into the home of the wife’s parents, called in Penang Hokkien “cin1 cue3”) might have some connection to using 官 for a woman, but the whole argument remains very tenuous and vague. It seems highly unlikely that Classical Chinese usage would have been influenced by something as aberrant as this very regionally restricted higher status of women.

## The “closing” of the scroll

In the analysis, line 27 “鑒念不宣” is split into two parts, in terms of the meaning. The first two characters are interpreted as “(陳芳霖’ s mother’s) approval”, and the last two characters are interpreted as “I close (at this point)”.

My slight uncertainty about this interpretation arises from the fact that this is the only line in the whole scroll where two such different (and basically unrelated) ideas are so compactly written in one line. In many cases, a single line expresses one complete phrase or thought. In some cases, a single line expresses *part* of a phrase or thought, but that part itself represents a certain unity. There are even exceptional cases where a single line expresses a very incomplete phrase or thought (because of the desire to express respect, with the use of 雙抬 (shuang1 tai2), as described elsewhere in this analysis). In contrast, line 27 (in the analysis) is the only case of the *opposite* situation, where a single line expresses two very different thoughts. Furthermore, having these two separate ideas in one line would imply that in reading, a slight pause would be needed between the second and third character. To me, this goes against the rhythmic feel of the rest of the text of the scroll.

I hence wonder if the “鑒念不宣” might not better be interpreted as “(陳芳霖’ s mother’s) **hitherto unexpressed** approval”, thereby making the phrase into a single thought.

Here again, this alternative explanation is being put forward only very tentatively.

## What the two people being married themselves thought of the scroll

As mentioned in the introduction, the bride and groom themselves had practically no knowledge of Chinese characters. This raises the question of what the scroll actually *meant* to the two individuals in question. For one thing, I imagine that they would have had close to no idea of its content <sup>7</sup>. I can imagine that someone might have explained to them what it

<sup>6</sup> Duaaagiii too agrees that this is puzzling.

<sup>7</sup> I make this assertion on the basis of the fact that both my uncle (one of the sons of the bride and groom in question) and myself have (as beyond middle-aged adults) been learning Chinese in our spare time - enthusiastically and with

said; but my mental image of their “understanding” or “appreciation” of the scroll is one where they would have just stood by nodding uncomprehendingly, as it was explained to them (if indeed this happened at all).

With such a poor grasp of its content, would they have valued it only as a “work of art”, with some vague notion that it related to their marriage? Unfortunately, this question will remain unanswered, as neither of them is still alive, and neither left a record of their thoughts on the matter.

## **The wider role of such scrolls in the society of the time**

The above leads to more general questions about the role of such scrolls in the society of the time.

The format of the scroll - the fact that it has pre-printed elements, with a standard heading “二姓合婚” - indicates that it definitely wasn't a “one-off object” / a “unicum”, but rather, a “standard object”, commissioned by the family of a person about to get married. But, given that, the question arises as to whether they were only commissioned by people of a particular socio-economic class, or if it was done by people from many levels of society. How much did the commissioning of such a scroll cost? In any case, the “quality” and “look” of the object indicate that it was something special, not just a casual disposable object. Furthermore, were such scrolls always commissioned only by the family of the groom, to thank (or make a proposal to) the family of the bride, or did it also occur the other way around? Another related question is whether such scrolls were commissioned primarily by the Chinese-educated Chinese, with some Babas also doing it, or whether it was in fact the other way around, with this as an antiquated practice, performed only by the Babas, preserving a tradition which had already died out among more recent migrants from China. Members of my family are not aware of any other such scrolls - owned by either the siblings or cousins of the bride and groom, or by family friends of the same generation as the bride and groom.<sup>8</sup>

Yet another question is how much variation there was in the text of such scrolls: were they individually composed, or were they more or less standard formulations? There is little in the text itself which isn't formulaic, and even the references to the famous historical ancestors of the Tan family could have been just standard classical references - blindly slotted in, and varying depending on the surname of the family being addressed?

Such questions can only be answered if more scrolls of the same nature are studied, or if individuals from that time can speak authoritatively, based on what they experienced in their youth.

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diligence - for years, and yet the level of Chinese we had attained was nowhere even remotely close to enabling us to understand the scroll. Indeed, to push the point, it wasn't even remotely close to enabling us to have a *vague idea* of the contents of the scroll, without a massive amount of help from members of the extended family, and from contributors to the Minnan Forum. And the level of Chinese we had attained would undoubtedly already have been far higher than that of the bride and groom in question.

<sup>8</sup> A prominent Malaysian historian - Tan Kim Hong (author of, among other works, “*The Chinese in Penang: a Pictorial History*”) - has remarked that he has never come across a scroll of this type. He is familiar with a ‘much simpler version’, with the *entire text* pre-printed, with blanks for the names of the specific bride and groom to be filled in. He explains that such documents were used for solemnizing the marriage on the day of the marriage itself, and were signed by both the bride and groom, as well as by the official who conducted the ceremony. Such documents were however quite different in format - and would appear to be slightly different in function - from the marriage scroll discussed here. In any case, they were certainly a lot less elaborate.

## Appendix 1 - detailed translation

In the presentation of the text of the scroll in the table of characters given below:

- Each character of the text is presented in a single cell in a single row of the table.
- Preceding the character, on the left, in the same row of the table are:
  - The column number and character number within the column. E.g. 26.04 indicates that the character in question is the 4th character in column 26 of the scroll.
  - The pronunciation(s) of the character in pinyin.
  - ▣ The page number of the dictionary entry for the character. The (printed) dictionary used is “*A Chinese-English Dictionary (Revised Edition)*” by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1997.
- Following the character, on the right, in the same row of the table is a translation into English.
  - ℓ Translations from public sources:
    - ▣ The meaning(s) of the character, as given in the printed dictionary cited above. From a list of meanings (separate by semi-colons), the most appropriate meaning(s) in the context are highlighted by **bolding**.
    - The meaning(s) of a character-compound, if this differs drastically from the meaning(s) of the individual characters making up the compound.
    - Additional meanings from the online “MDBG Chinese-English Dictionary” website <http://www.mdbg.net/> are also included, if they differ to a significant extent from the meanings found in the printed dictionary.
  - Further explanations. The aforementioned sources were not sufficient for quite a number of the phrases of Classical Chinese, or where more specific cultural knowledge was needed. Various private individuals and my own research on the Internet have provided the necessary information.
- Very dark dividers separate the characters of each column of the scroll. These dividers are labelled XX.00 to show the start of a new column in the text, where XX is the number of the column. E.g. 27.00 indicates the start of the characters in column 27.
- Less dark dividers separate the characters of sub-parts of column 29. These are labelled 29a.00, 29b.00, and 29c.00 to show the start of a new sub-part in column 29 of the text.
- Colour coding:
  - **Green**: this seems to be clear and without doubt - i.e. with some goodwill, the meaning of the line can be derived from the meanings of the individual characters or character compounds.
  - ▣ **Orange**: this is slightly unclear or doubtful.
  - **Red**: this is very unclear or doubtful. Thankfully, after 2 full months of intense investigation, there is little red left.

The forms of characters:

- The distinction between traditional and simplified characters is not as clear-cut as might appear to a modern reader. The text of the scroll demonstrates this in the following ways:
  - ▣ A form which is generally a simplified form - with a corresponding (different) traditional form - may sometimes itself also be a traditional form, in another meaning or pronunciation, and be listed as such in dictionaries. Such a form is hence often available for pinyin entry as a traditional character (characters 01.03 and 21.02)
  - ℓ A dictionary may indicate that one form is solely a simplified form and another form is solely a traditional form, but this is not always in accordance with the forms available for pinyin entry. I.e. a form listed as solely a simplified form may sometimes be available for pinyin entry as a traditional form (characters 20.02, 23.01, and 23.03). This might be because the character in question belongs in the previous category, but its usage (i.e. specific meaning) as a traditional form is so obscure that it isn't listed in a general dictionary.

- ㊦ Forms which are listed in dictionaries (solely) as simplified forms were also used in the text, where one would have expected only traditional forms (characters 01.06, 09.06, 14.01, 20.01, and 29b.01). Such forms are generally not available for pinyin entry as a traditional form.
- ㊦ Some characters have a traditional form which differs only slightly from the modern form. In some cases they are considered sufficiently different to have their own computer code, and are available for pinyin entry as a traditional form (character 07.01, 12.03). In other cases they aren't considered sufficiently different to have their own computer code, and so are not available for pinyin entry as a separate traditional form, still less as a simplified form (character 11.01). See Appendix 3.

The details of all these situations are discussed in footnotes.

- Duaaagiii has detected that a number of characters may be incorrectly written (see characters 14.03, 17.04, 21.02, 24.01). His proposed amendments are given at the relevant spot.

The alternative and amended forms of the characters are presented in Appendix 2.

The table of characters

Not handwritten, but pre-printed

00.00				
00.01	er4	315	二 二	[Two]
00.02	xing4	1399	姓	[Surname, family name]
00.03	he2	477	合	[To close, shut; join, <b>combine</b> ; whole; to suit, agree; to be equal to, add up to; proper]
00.04	hun1	533	婚	[To wed, <b>marry</b> ; wedding, marriage] <b>A Marriage Between Two Families.</b>

Handwritten

01.00				
01.01	gong1	416	恭	[Respectful]
01.02	yin1	1496	姻	[Marriage, <b>relation by marriage</b> ]
01.03	juan4	656	眷 <sup>9</sup>	[A. <b>Family dependent</b> ] [B. To have tender feelings for]
01.04	di4	265	弟	[ <b>Younger brother</b> ]
01.05	li3	735	李	[Plum, a surname] [A <b>surname</b> ]

<sup>9</sup> In the first meaning A. “family dependent”, the dictionary gives the traditional and simplified form as being the same: 眷; in the second meaning B. “to have tender feelings for”, the dictionary gives the simplified form as 眷, corresponding to the traditional form 睠. The scroll has the form 眷, which is available for pinyin entry as a traditional character, i.e. in its first meaning (“A”).

01.06	jun4	663	俊 <sup>10</sup>	[Handsome, pretty; of outstanding talent] [A <b>personal name</b> ]
01.07	qing1	990	卿	[A minister or high official in ancient times, an emperor's form of address for a minister, a term of endearment formerly used between husband and wife, or between close friends] [A <b>personal name</b> ] Lee Choon Kheng
01.08	ju1	649	鞠	[To rear; to bring up; a surname]
01.09	gong1	416	躬	[Personally; to bend forward, <b>bow</b> ] 鞠躬 = "to make a bow, kow-tow". Yours respectfully (literally: your younger brother through marriage), Lee Choon Kheng, bows Note: line 01, referring to the writer, is placed much lower than the rest of the text, to express humility on the part of the writer.
02.00				
02.01	da4	222	大	[ <b>Big</b> ]
02.02	yin1	1496	姻	[Marriage, <b>relation by marriage</b> ]
02.03	wang4	1280	望	[To gaze into the distance, look over; to call on, visit; to hope, expect; reputation, <b>prestige</b> ; resentment, enmity; to, towards; full moon, the 15th day of the lunar month]
02.04	chen2	148	陳	[To lay out, put on display; to state, explain; old, stale; the Chen dynasty, a surname] [A <b>surname</b> ]
02.05	fu3	370	府	[Seat of government, government office; government repository; official residence, mansion; <b>your home</b> (honorific); prefecture] 陳府 = "the Tan family".
02.06	fang1	335	芳	[Sweet smelling, fragrant; good (name or reputation), virtuous] [A <b>personal name</b> ]
02.07	lin2	764	霖	[Continuous heavy rain] [A <b>personal name</b> ] Hong Lim of the Tan family
02.08	weng1	1299	翁	[Old man; father; <b>father-in-law</b> ]
02.09	zun1	1696	尊	[ <b>Senior</b> , of a senior generation; to respect, venerate, honour; honorific "your"]
02.10	yin1	1496	姻	[Marriage, <b>relation by marriage</b> ]
02.11	jia1	569	家	[ <b>Family</b> , household; home; a person or family engaged in a certain trade; a specialist in a certain field; a school of thought, school; my; domestic, tame; measure word for families or business establishments]

<sup>10</sup> The dictionary gives the simplified form as 俊 corresponding to two traditional forms *resembling* 雋 (this latter being a traditional character, pronounced "juan4", and meaning "meaningful"). In the first variant, the 亻 occupies the whole height of the character, i.e. 雋, and this is available for pinyin entry only as a traditional character. In the second variant, the "rotated 弓" of "雋" is replaced by a 乃, but this is only available for entry as a simplified character 隽, and then only under the pronunciation "juan4" (listed in the dictionary as the simplified form of 雋). However, the scroll has the form 俊, which is available for pinyin entry only as a simplified character.

02.12	lao3	720	老	[Old]
02.13	xian1	1339	先	[Earlier, <b>before</b> , in advance etc]
02.14	sheng1	1095	生	[To give birth, bear; <b>to be born</b> ; to grow; life, living; alive, living; to be afflicted with, get, have; to light a fire/stove; unripe, green; raw, uncooked; unprocessed, unrefined, crude; unfamiliar, unacquainted, strange; stiff, mechanical; very, much] 先生 = “teacher, mister; <b>gentleman, sir</b> ”
02.15	ge2	400	閣	[Pavilion; cabinet of a government; boudoir; shelf]
02.16	xia4	1332	下	[Down] honorific: 閣下 = “ <b>Your Excellency</b> ”.  There is a heaping up of honorifics before and after the name of Tan Hong Lim.  [before] the honourable Mr. Tan Hong Lim  Note: line 02 is raised higher than most of the main text of scroll. This is “雙抬” (shuang1 tai2), as explained in this table at line 07.
03.00				
03.01	fu2	365	伏	[To lean over, bend over; <b>to lie prostrate</b> ; to subside, go down; to hide; to yield; to subdue, vanquish; the hottest days of the year; a surname]
03.02	yi3	1482	以	[With, by means of; according to; because of; <b>in order to, so as to</b> ; at, on (a date or time); and, as well as]  wishing (literally: ‘lying prostrate in order to’ [say])
04.00				
04.01	wu3	1311	五	[Five]
04.02	shi4	1122	世	[Lifetime, life; <b>generation</b> ; from generation to generation, through the generations; term of address among old family friends; age, era; the world; epoch]
04.03	qi2	945	其	[His, her, its, their; she, she, it, they; that, such; <b>it</b> = referring to no definite person or thing; used to make a guess or a retort; used to give an order; suffix; used to make a guess or a retort; next, secondly, then; secondary]
04.04	chang1	132	昌	[ <b>Prosperous</b> , flourishing]  five generations of prosperity [and]
05.00				
05.01	bai3	25	百	[Hundred]
05.02	nian2	878	年	[Year]
05.03	hao3	472	好	[Good]
05.04	he2	477	合	[To close, shut; to join, <b>combine</b> ; whole; suit, agree; to be equal to, add up to; proper]  a harmonious union lasting a hundred years.
06.00				

06.01	gong1	416	恭	[ <b>Respectful</b> ]
06.02	wei2	1286	惟	[Only, alone; but; used before a year or month; <b>thinking</b> , thought] I praise
07.00				
07.01	gao1	392	高 <sup>11</sup>	[ <b>High</b> , tall]
07.02	men2	823	門	[Door, gate] [MDBG: opening / door / gate / doorway / gateway / valve / switch / way to do something / knack / <b>family</b> / house / (religious) sect / school (of thought) / class / category / phylum or division (taxonomy)] your esteemed family, [for]  Note: line 07 consists only of the two words 高門, and is higher than most of the main text of scroll. It is actually part of the previous line, and there is a name for this type of layout: 雙抬 (shuang1 tai2) = “raised by two (characters)”. Duaaagiii explains that it is used to indicate respect for the object referred to in that part of the sentence - symbolic of looking up, as it were. On this particular line it refers to the Tan family. This can be seen also in lines 02, 10, 26, and 27, where reference is made to Tan Hong Lim, the Tan family, or Tan Hong Lim’s mother.
08.00				
08.01	jie1	605	接	[To come into contact with; to connect join, put together, <b>to continue</b> ; to catch take hold of; to receive; to meet, welcome; to take over]
08.02	hu2	501	胡	[Non-Han; introduced from the northern and western nationalities; recklessly, wantonly, outrageously; why] [ <b>A personal name</b> ]
08.03	man3	808	滿	[Full, filled, packed; fill; expire; completely, entirely, perfectly; quit, very; satisfied; complacent, conceited; the Man nationality; a surname] [ <b>A personal name</b> ]  Duaaagiii explains that 胡滿 Hu Man = “the son-in-law of Zhou’s King 武 (Wu1)” [武 = military; connected with boxing skill, swordplay, etc; valiant, fierce; a surname].
08.04	zhi1	1615	之	[To go, leave for; used in place of an objective noun or pronoun; <b>used between an attribute and the word it modifies</b> = 的]
08.05	ling3/4	769 /7 71	令	[ling3 = ream of paper; ling4 - to order, command, decree; to cause someone to; drinking game; an ancient official title; season; <b>good, excellent</b> ; honorific: your]

<sup>11</sup> The scroll has a different form (instead of a 冫 in the middle, there is a ‘ladder-like’ element). It is available for pinyin entry as a traditional character (although 高 is available for entry as a traditional character too).

08.06	xu4	1409	緒	[The beginning of a matter; <b>thread ends</b> , remnants; mental or emotional state; task, cause, undertaking]  continuing the succession of the noble line of Hu Man, [and]
09.00				
09.01	yan3	1438	衍	[Low-lying flatland; marsh swamp, bog]  [MDBG: to spread out / to develop / to overflow / to <b>amplify</b> ]
09.02	jing4	638	敬	[Respect; respectfully; offer politely] [ <b>A personal name</b> ]
09.03	zhong4	1641	仲	[The second month of a season; the second among brothers; middle, intermediate; a surname] [ <b>A personal name</b> ]  Duaaagiii explains that 敬仲 Jing Zhong = “an ancestor of the Dukedom or Kingdom of 齊 (Qi2)”. 齊 (simplified: 齐) = “The Southern Qi Dynasty (479-502), one of the Southern Dynasties”. He further explains that Jing Zhong was his courtesy name - Chen (陳) was his family name, Wan (完) was his given name.
09.04	zhi1	1615	之	[To go, leave for; used in place of an objective noun or pronoun; <b>used between an attribute and the word it modifies</b> = 的]
09.05	fang1	335	芳	[Sweet-smelling, fragrant; good (name or reputation), <b>virtuous</b> ]
09.06	zong1	1684	踪 <sup>12</sup>	[ <b>Footprint</b> , track, trace]  continuing the legacy of Jing Zhong,  Both 胡滿 (hu2 man3) and 敬仲 (jing4 zhong4) are considered to be ancestors of people having the surname of 陳 (Tan), so it makes perfect sense for Lee Choon Kheng to say these two lines to Tan Hong Lim.
10.00				
10.01	zun1	1696	尊	[ <b>Senior</b> , of a senior generation; to respect, venerate, honour; honorific “your”]
10.02	yin1	1496	姻	[Marriage, <b>relation by marriage</b> ]
10.03	jia1	569	家	[ <b>Family</b> , household; home; a person or family engaged in a certain trade; a specialist in a certain field; a school of thought, school; my; domestic, tame; measure word for families or business establishments]
10.04	lao3	720	老	[ <b>Old</b> ]

<sup>12</sup> The dictionary gives the simplified form as 踪 corresponding to the traditional form 蹤. In accordance with this, 踪 is available for pinyin entry only as a simplified character, and 蹤 is available for pinyin entry only as a traditional character. However, the scroll has the form 踪.



10.05	xian1	1339	先	[Earlier, <b>before</b> , in advance etc]
10.06	sheng1	1095	生	[To give birth, bear; <b>to be born</b> ; to grow; life, living; alive, living; to be afflicted with, get, have; to light a fire/stove; unripe, green; raw, uncooked; unprocessed, unrefined, crude; unfamiliar, unacquainted, strange; stiff, mechanical; very, much] 先生 = “teacher, mister; <b>gentleman, sir</b> ” [as well as] your honourable self, Note: line 10 is raised higher than most of the main text of scroll. This is “雙抬” (shuang1 tai2), as explained in this table at line 07.
11.00				
11.01	qi4	958	器 13	[Implement, utensil, ware; organ; capacity, talent; to think highly of]
11.02	yu3	1536	宇	[Eaves; house] Duaaagiii explains that 宇 here means “appearance”. 器宇 is in any case a known compound, meaning “bearing, deportment”.
11.03	hong2	493	宏	[Great, <b>grand</b> , magnificent]
11.04	shen1	1088	深	[ <b>Deep</b> ; depth; hard to understand, difficult; abstruse, profound; thorough-going, penetrating, profound; close, intimate (of relations or feelings); dark, deep, rich (colours); far on into the day, night season, etc, late; very, greatly, deeply] whose bearing is dignified,
12.00				
12.01	wei1	1282	威	[Impressive strength, <b>might</b> , power; by force]
12.02	yi2	1477	儀	[ <b>Appearance, bearing</b> ; apparatus, instrument]
12.03	gao1	392	高 14	[ <b>High, tall</b> ]
12.04	jie2	610	潔	[ <b>Clean</b> ] awe-inspiring and virtuous,
13.00				
13.01	xin1	1386	欣 15	[ <b>Glad, happy, joyful</b> ]

<sup>13</sup> The form of 器 used in the scroll is similar, but with the 犬 (some fonts render this as 大) in the centre looking slightly different: it resembles a 大, but the right downward stroke is very much more elongated and goes *beneath* the bottom right 口. This form is not available for pinyin entry as a simplified or traditional character - the simplified and traditional forms of this character are identical in the pinyin entry system and are rendered as 器.

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 11.

13.02	huai2	514	懷	[Bosom, mind; <b>to keep in mind</b> , cherish; to think of, yearn for; to conceive (a child)]
13.03	yu4	1543	御 16	[A. <b>To drive (a carriage)</b> ; to manage, control; of an emperor, imperial] [B. To resist, keep out, ward off]
13.04	li3	735	李	[Plum, a surname] [A surname] Duaaagiii explains that 御李 literally means “to drive 李 around on a carriage”. This is an allusion to the story of two people by the name of 李膺 (Li3 Ying1) and 荀爽 (Xun2 Shuang3). 李膺 was so well-respected that 荀爽 felt immensely honoured when he got to drive 李膺 in a horse carriage, and he went around telling people: 今日乃得御李君矣 = “I got to drive 李’s horse carriage today!”. So 御李 can be translated as “to bask in your (or your family’s) glory”. being in your presence is an honour
14.00				
14.01	qie4	981	窃 17	[To steal, pilfer; secretly, surreptitiously, furtively; humble] [MDBG: <b>I beg to presume / steal</b> ]
14.02	xing4	1399	幸	[ <b>Fortunate</b> , lucky; rejoice; to hope, trust; fortunately, luckily; tour of a monarch’s dominions; (imperial) favour]

<sup>15</sup> The dictionary gives the simplified form as 欣 corresponding to the traditional form 訢. However, the scroll has the form 欣, which is available for pinyin entry as a traditional character.

<sup>16</sup> In the list of meanings A. “to drive (a carriage); to manage, control; of an emperor, imperial”, the dictionary gives the traditional and simplified form as being the same: 御; in the meaning B. “to resist, to keep out, ward off”, the dictionary gives the simplified form as 御, corresponding to the traditional form 禦. The scroll has the form 御, which however is *not* available for pinyin entry as a traditional character. This is explainable if the traditional form for the first list of meanings (“A”) hasn’t been taken into account by the pinyin entry system.

<sup>17</sup> The dictionary gives the simplified form as 窃 corresponding to the traditional form 竊. In accordance with this, 窃 is available for pinyin entry only as a simplified character, and 竊 is available for pinyin entry only as a traditional character. However, the scroll has the form 窃.

14.03	yi1	1475	依	<p>[To depend on; to comply with, listen to, yield to; according to, in the light of, judging by]</p> <p>Duaaagiii explains that this character is incorrectly written and should be 蒹, see 14.04.</p>												
14.04	jia1	572	葭	<p>[Young shoot of a reed] [MDBG: Phragmites communis (= the common reed)]</p> <p>蒹葭倚玉 - fixed 4-character (Classical Chinese) expression:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="574 548 1318 823"> <tr> <td>蒹</td> <td>jian1</td> <td>MDBG = reed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>葭</td> <td>jia1</td> <td>572 reed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>倚</td> <td>yi3</td> <td>1484 to lean on or against, rest on or against; to rely on, count on; biased, partial</td> </tr> <tr> <td>玉</td> <td>yu4</td> <td>1539 jade</td> </tr> </table> <p>Said of humble people mixing with superior people.</p> <p>Literally: reeds and rushes lean against a jade tree, i.e. our humble family may be associated with your noble family</p>	蒹	jian1	MDBG = reed	葭	jia1	572 reed	倚	yi3	1484 to lean on or against, rest on or against; to rely on, count on; biased, partial	玉	yu4	1539 jade
蒹	jian1	MDBG = reed														
葭	jia1	572 reed														
倚	yi3	1484 to lean on or against, rest on or against; to rely on, count on; biased, partial														
玉	yu4	1539 jade														
15.00																
15.01	bu4	89	不	[Not]												
15.02	qi4	957	棄	[To throw away, discard, abandon]												
15.03	peng2	912	蓬	[Fleabane; fluffy, dishevelled; measure word for twiggy, leafy plants, clump, cluster]												
15.04	men2	823	門	<p>[Door, gate]</p> <p>[MDBG: opening / door / gate / doorway / gateway / valve / switch / way to do something / knack / family / house / (religious) sect / school (of thought) / class / category / phylum or division (taxonomy)]</p> <p>and that you did not reject our humble family,</p>												
16.00																
16.01	fu3	370	俯	<p>[To bow one's head; to condescend to]</p> <p>[MDBG: look down / stoop]</p>												
16.02	cong2	203	從	[To follow, comply with, obey; to join, be engaged in; in a certain manner, according to a certain principle; follower, attendant; secondary, accessory; relationship between cousins, etc of the same paternal grandfather or great-grandfather].												
16.03	bing1	77	冰	[Ice; to put on the ice, to ice; to feel cold]												

16.04	yi4	1486	議	[Opinion, view; discuss, exchange views on, talk over] 永人 listed in dictionary as “matchmaker” and approved the marriage,
17.00				
17.01	xu3	1408	許	[To praise; to promise; to allow, permit; maybe, perhaps; (of a girl) to be betrothed to; indicating a rough estimate; a surname]
17.02	yi3	1482	以	[With, by means of; according to; because of; in order to so as to; at, on (a date or time); and, as well as]
17.03	ling3/4	769 /7 71	令	[ling3 = ream of paper; ling4 - to order, command, decree; to cause someone to; drinking game; an ancient official title; season; good, excellent; honorific: your]
17.04	yuan2/4	1549 / 1552	媛	[yuan2 = a lovely woman, as in 嬋媛 chan2 yuan2; yuan4 = a beautiful woman]  Duaaagiii explains that this character is incorrectly written, and should be 媛 ai4 (simplified: 媛). [6 令媛 ling4 ai4 = beloved daughter].
17.05	qing1	990	清	[Unmixed, clear; distinct, clarified; quiet; completely thoroughly; to settle, clear up; to clean up, purge; to count; just and honest] [A personal name]
17.06	miao4	837	妙	[Wonderful, excellent, fine; ingenious, clever, subtle] [A personal name] Cheng Beow
17.07	guan1	437	官	[Government official, officer, office-holder; governmental, official; public; a surname]  to betroth your daughter, Cheng Beow  Note: in terms of the social conditions of the time, it is curious that 官 is used to refer to a woman. The speculation is that that the 官 is used to elevate her, whereas the 者 referring to Seng Kooi in the next line is neutral.
18.00				
18.01	pei4	909	配	[To join in marriage; to mate (animals); to mix according to a fixed ratio, compound; to distribute according to a plan, apportion; to find something to fit or replace something else; subordinate, supplementary, supporting; to match, harmonize with, be in harmony with; to deserve, be qualified, suit; to exile, banish]
18.02	wei2/4	1284 / 1290	為	[wei2 = to do, act; to act as, to serve as; become; to be, mean; wei4 = in the interest of, for; because of; for the purpose of, for the sake of; to, towards; to stand for, support]
18.03	zong1	1683	宗	[Ancestor; clan; sect, faction, school; principal aim, purpose; to take as one’s model (in academic or artistic work); model, great master; a surname]  [MDBG: school / sect / purpose / model / ancestor / family]
18.04	zhi2	1622	姪	[Brother’s son, nephew]

18.05	cheng2	151	成	[To accomplish, succeed; to become, turn into; achievement, result; fully developed or fully grown; established, ready-made; in considerable numbers or amounts; all right, OK; capable, able; a surname] [A <b>personal name</b> ]
18.06	gui4	449	貴	[Expensive, costly, dear; highly valued, valuable; of high rank, noble; honorific “your”] [A <b>personal name</b> ] Seng Kooi
18.07	zhe3	1598	者	[(Used after a verb or adjective, or a verb or adjective phrase to indicate a <b>class of person</b> or things) one of those who; the thing or things which; “-er”, used to indicate the <b>person</b> or persons doing the stated work or holding the stated doctrine]. Here “person”. to our nephew, Seng Kooi.
19.00				
19.01	yi2	1477	儀	[Appearance, bearing; apparatus, instrument]
19.02	can2	114	慚 <sup>18</sup>	慚 = to feel ashamed]
19.03	bu4	89	不	[Not]
19.04	tian3	1223	腆	[Sumptuous, rich; dial. to protrude, thrust out] Our gifts are humble,
20.00				
20.01	li3	734	礼 <sup>19</sup>	[Ceremony, rite; courtesy, etiquette, <b>manners</b> ; gift, present]
20.02	kui4	705	愧 <sup>20</sup>	[Ashamed, conscience-stricken]
20.03	da4	222	大	[Big]

<sup>18</sup> The dictionary gives the simplified form as 慚 corresponding to the traditional form 慚; there is no listing for 慚. This is probably just a small oversight on the part of the dictionary, as in the same dictionary the simplified form 鑒 has the two traditional forms 鑒 (used in 27.01) and 鑑. The scroll has the form 慚 which is available for pinyin entry as a traditional character (as is 慚).

<sup>19</sup> The dictionary gives the simplified form as 礼 corresponding to the traditional form 禮. In accordance with this, 礼 is available for pinyin entry only as a simplified character, and 禮 is available for pinyin entry only as a traditional character. However, the scroll has the form 礼.

<sup>20</sup> The dictionary gives the simplified form as 愧 corresponding to the traditional form 媿. However, the scroll has the form 愧, which is available for pinyin entry as a traditional character.

20.04	fang1	333	方	<p>[Square; involution, power (maths); measure word for square things; short for square metre or cubic metre; upright, honest; a surname] 大方 = “expert, scholar; generous, liberal; natural and poised, easy, unaffected; in good taste, tasteful”; [MDBG: da4 fang0 = generous / magnanimous / poise / a great moral principle]</p> <p>Duaaagiii interprets 大方 here as “majorly”.</p> <p>our manners shamefully lacking.</p> <p>Note: both 儀 (19.01) and 禮 (20.01) mean both “gifts” as well as “manners”. So, over the two lines, the writer is being self-deprecatory about his and his family’s gifts / manners. However, Duaaagiii explains that 腆儀 means “a big/generous gift”, so line 19 儀慚不腆 can be interpreted as “our gifts are not generous, i.e. humble”, and line 20 礼愧大方 as “our manners shamefully lacking”.</p>
21.00				
21.01	ji2	552	吉	[Lucky, auspicious, propitious; a surname]
21.02	xie2 /ye4	1376 / 1458	叶 <sup>21</sup>	<p>[A: xie2 = to be in harmony, to be in accord]</p> <p>[B: ye4 = leaf, foliage; leaf-like thing; a surname; part of a historical period]</p> <p>Duaaagiii feels this character is incorrectly written and should be 時 [1113 a long period of time, times, days; <b>fixed time</b>; season; time of day, hour, o’clock; current, present; opportunity, chance; now and then, occasionally, from time to time; (grammar) tense; a surname]. He explains that 吉時良辰 makes sense, but 吉叶良辰 does not.</p>
21.03	liang2	750	良	[Good, fine; good people; (formal) very, very much]
21.04	chen2	148	辰	<p>[Celestial bodies; any of the traditional 2-hour periods of the day; time, <b>day</b>, occasion; the fifth of the twelve Earthly Branches]</p> <p>[MDBG: 5th earthly branch / 7-9 a.m.]</p> <p>(We will choose) an auspicious date and time</p>
22.00				

<sup>21</sup> For the pronunciation and meaning A: “xie2”, the dictionary gives the traditional and simplified form as being the same: 叶; for the pronunciation and meaning B: “ye4”, the dictionary gives the simplified form as 叶, corresponding to the traditional form 葉. The scroll has the form 叶, which is available for pinyin entry as a traditional character, i.e. for the pronunciation and meaning A. “xie2”. *This is mostly irrelevant, as this appears to be an incorrectly written character.*

22.01	jing4	638	敬	[Respect; respectfully; <b>to offer politely</b> ]
22.02	xing2	1393	行	[To go, walk, travel; temporary, makeshift; to be current, to circulate; <b>to do, perform, carry out</b> ; behaviour conduct; to be all right, can do; capable, competent; soon]
22.03	wen2	1294	文	[Character, script, writing; language; literary composition, writing; culture; <b>formal ritual</b> ; civilian, civil; gentle, refined; certain natural phenomena; cover up, paint over; tattoo; measure word for copper cash; a surname]
22.04	ding4	281	定	[Calm, stable; <b>to decide, fix, set</b> ; fixed, settled, established; to subscribe to book, newspaper, etc, book a seat, tickets, etc; to order merchandise etc; formal: surely, certainly, definitely]  Duaaagiii explains that here 文定 = “ <b>the betrothal</b> ”.  to respectfully carry out the betrothal
23.00				
23.01	xin1	1386	欣 <sup>22</sup>	[Glad, happy, joyful]
23.02	guan1	436	觀	[ <b>To look at, watch, observe</b> ; sight, view; outlook, view, concept]
23.03	yan4	1442	雁 <sup>23</sup>	[ <b>Wild goose</b> ; goose]
23.04	bai4	28	拜	[ <b>To do obeisance</b> ; to pay a courtesy call; to congratulate (on a certain occasion); to visit; to confer a title on somebody, appoint; to acknowledge somebody as one’s master, godfather, etc; to express one’s thanks]  Duaaagiii explains that in traditional Chinese weddings, the man’s family would give the woman’s family a wild goose as a part of the ritual known as 奠雁 dian4 yan4 = “to establish/settle the goose”; and a traditional wedding ceremony involved a lot of kow-towing, hence the 拜.  Literally: I look forward to the wild goose and the bowing, i.e. I look forward to watching the marriage rituals.
24.00				

<sup>22</sup> See footnote 15.

<sup>23</sup> The dictionary gives the simplified form as 雁 corresponding to the traditional form 鴈. However, the scroll has the form 雁, which is available for pinyin entry as a traditional character.

24.01	-	-	佇 ?	<p>The character on the scroll is not 佇 = 亻 (man) + 宀 (roof) + 丁 (4th heavenly stem), but rather 佇 = 亻 (man) + 宇, i.e. 亻 (man) + 宀 (roof) + 于.</p> <p>If it is an incorrect rendition of 佇, then 佇 = [1653 zhu4 = to stand for a long while] [MDBG: wait / look towards / turn one's back on]. However that doesn't make much sense in the context.</p> <p>Duaaagiii conjectures that it should have been 伏, because the character as written on the scroll isn't in the (massive and authoritative) Kangxi Dictionary (康熙字典), nor is it in Unicode, so it is probably an incorrectly written character.</p> <p>Moreover, Duaaagiii explains that 伏冀 (= "to lie prostrate hoping") makes sense while 佇冀 does not.</p>
24.02	ji4	567	冀	[To hope, long for, look forward to; another name for Hebei; a surname]
24.03	xiong2	1401	熊	[Bear, teddy bear; surname; dial. to rebuke, upbraid, scold]
24.04	zhan1/4	1580 / 1582	占	<p>[zhan1 = to practice divination, zhan4 = to occupy, seize, take; to constitute, hold, make up, account for] Here: "to read a fortune".</p> <p>熊占 = "to observe a bear omen". Duaaagiii explains that dreaming of a bear was an omen that a baby boy would be forthcoming. So, idiomatically: and hope that they get a baby boy</p>
25.00				
25.01	tong3	1241	統	[Interconnected system; to gather into one, unite; altogether; any tube-shaped part of an article of clothing, etc]
25.02	qi2	945	祈	<p>[To pray; to entreat]</p> <p>I (also) beseech</p>
26.00				
26.01	zun1	1696	尊	[Senior, of a senior generation; to respect, venerate, honour; honorific "your"]
26.02	ci2	200	慈	[Kind, loving; mother]
26.03	fu3	370	俯	<p>[To bow one's head; to condescend to]</p> <p>[MDBG: look down / stoop]</p>



26.04	ci4	203	賜	<p>[To bestow, confer; favour, <b>grant</b>; gift]</p> <p><b>your mother to condescend to grant</b></p> <p>Note: line 26 is raised higher than most of the main text of scroll. This is “雙抬” (shuang1 tai2), as explained in this table at line 07.</p>
27.00				
27.01	jian4	589	鑒	<p>[Mirror (made of bronze or brass in ancient times); to reflect, mirror; warning, object lesson; <b>to inspect, scrutinize, examine</b>; (polite, usually used in the opening phrase in letters) Dear]</p>
27.02	nian4	880	念	<p>[<b>To think of</b>; to miss; thought, idea; to read aloud; to attend school; twenty on cheques to prevent forgery]</p> <p>Duaaagiii explains that here 鑒念 = “approval”.</p>
27.03	bu4	89	不	<p>[<b>Not</b>]</p>
27.04	xuan1	1410	宣	<p>[<b>To declare, proclaim, announce</b>; to lead off (liquids), drain; a surname] [MDBG 不宣而戰 bu4 xuan1 er2 zhan4 = “to open hostilities without declaring war, to start an undeclared war”] so 不宣 = “undeclared”.</p> <p>Duaaagiii explains that it means - by extension - “I will not go into detail”, but here used as a closing, not for its literal meaning.</p> <p><b>her approval. I close at this point.</b></p> <p>Note: line 27 is raised higher than most of the main text of scroll. This is “雙抬” (shuang1 tai2), as explained in this table at line 07.</p>
28.00				
28.01	shi2	-	𠄎	<p>This is a known alternative way of writing 時 (simplified: 时) = [1113 a long period of time, times, days; <b>fixed time</b>; season; time of day, hour, o'clock; current, present; opportunity, chance; now and then, occasionally, from time to time; (grammar) tense; a surname]. See Appendix 4 for details.</p>
28.02	long2	779	龍	<p>[Dragon; the dragon as symbol of the emperor; a huge extinct reptile; a surname]</p>

28.03	fei1	340	飛	[To fly]  龍飛 is a metaphor for the Emperor ascending the throne. Duaaagiii explains that the phrase being used as a model for the one on the scroll could have been 時龍飛光緒 (where 光緒 guang1 xu4 = the emperor's reign name) ..... 年. It seems reasonable to surmise that the reign name 光緒 was changed to 中華民國 for the scroll, without removing the 龍飛, so 時龍飛 just means "in a given year" or "on a given date".
28.04	zhong1	1634	中	[Centre]
28.05	hua2	509	華	[China; Chinese] 中華 = "Chinese"
28.06	min2	838	民	[The people; a member of a nationality; a person of a certain occupation; of the people, folk; civilian]
28.07	guo2	451	國	[Country, nation, state; of the state, national; of our country, Chinese; .a surname] 中華民國 = "the Chinese Republic"
28.08	shi2	1109	十	[Ten]
28.09	er4	315	二	[Two]
28.10	nian2	878	年	[Year]
28.11	liu4	777	六	[Six]
28.12	yue4	1552	月	[Moon; month; monthly; full-moon shaped, round]
28.13	er4	317	式	[Two]  A known variant of 二
28.14	ri4	1032	日	[Day]  12th year, 6th month, 2nd day after the founding of the Chinese Republic = 1912 - 1 + 12 years = (2 June 1923)
29.00				
29a.00				
29a.01	xia4	1338	夏	[Summer; the Xia Dynasty; ancient name for China]
29a.02	li4	739	曆	[Calendar] 夏曆 = one of the names for the Chinese lunar calendar, named after the Xia Dynasty.
29a.03	gui3	448	癸	[10th heavenly stem]
29a.04	hai4	464	亥	[12th earthly branch; 9-11 pm]
29a.05	nian2	878	年	[Year]

29a.06	si4	1171	四	[ <b>Four</b> ]
29a.07	yue4	1552	月	[Moon; <b>month</b> ; monthly; full-moon shaped, round]
29a.08	shi2	1109	十	[ <b>Ten</b> ]
29a.09	ba1	16	八	[ <b>Eight</b> ]
29a.10	ri4	1032	日	[ <b>Day</b> ]  In the year of the 10th heavenly stem and 12th earthly branch, 4th month, 18th day = the equivalent date according to the Chinese lunar calendar.  The system of combining one of the 10 heavenly stems and one of the 12 earthly branches in succession leads to a cycle of 60 years. 1923 was indeed the combination of 10th heavenly stem and 12th earthly branch, so this is the equivalent date according to the Chinese calendar. See Appendix 5 for details.
29b.00				
29b.01	jun4	663	俊 <sup>24</sup>	[Handsome, pretty; of outstanding talent] [ <b>A personal name</b> ]
29b.02	qing1	990	卿	[A minister or high official in ancient times, an emperor's form of address for a minister, a term of endearment formerly used between husband and wife, or between close friends] [ <b>A personal name</b> ] Choon Kheng
29c.00				
29c.01	zai4	1563	再	[ <b>Again</b> , once more, further]
29c.02	ju1	649	鞠	[To rear; to bring up; a surname]
29c.03	gong1	416	躬	[Personally; to bend forward, <b>bow</b> ] 鞠躬 = "to make a bow, kow-tow".  bows again
30.00				
30.01	guang1	441	光	[Light; scenery; honour, <b>glory</b> ; polite formulation; to glorify, bring honour to; smooth, glossy, polished; all gone, used up, nothing left; bare, naked]
30.02	qian2	965	前	[Front; forward, ahead; ago, <b>before</b> ; preceding; former, formerly; first; future]  before your glorious self

Not handwritten, but pre-printed

31.00				
31.01	te4	1207	特	[ <b>Special</b> , particular, unusual, exceptional; for a special purpose, specially; very, especially; secret agent]
31.02	bie2	75	別	[To leave, part; other, another; dial. to turn change; to differentiate, <b>distinguish</b> ; difference, distinction; classification, category; to fasten with a pin or clip; to stick in]

<sup>24</sup> See footnote 10.

31.03	zhi4	1630	製	[To <b>make</b> , manufacture]
31.04	zao4	1571	造	[To <b>make</b> , build, create; to invent, cook up, concoct; one of the two parties in a legal agreement or a lawsuit; dial. crop; to go to, to arrive at; achievements, attainments] Specially/custom made [for marriage contracts].

## Appendix 2 - alternative and amended forms of characters

The following summarizes the alternative and amended forms of characters found in the scroll.

### Key

dark blue(light blue): a traditional form (used in the scroll) - the simplified form is given for the sake of interest only.

light blue: a simplified form (used in the scroll), but also available for entry as a traditional form.

light blue(dark blue): a simplified form (used in the scroll), only available for entry as a simplified form - where the traditional form might have been expected.

light green (dark green): a known alternative form (used in the scroll) corresponding to this (possibly more common) equivalent form.

red(orange) : possibly an incorrectly written character (used in the scroll) - amended to this character.

00	二 姓 合 婚
01	恭 姻 眷 弟 李 俊(儁) 卿 鞠 躬
02	大 姻 望 陳(陈) 府 芳 霖 翁 尊 姻 家 老 先 生 閣(阁) 下
03	伏 以
04	五 世 其 昌
05	百 年 好 合
06	恭 惟(維)
07	高(高) 門(门)
08	接 胡 滿 之 令 緒
09	衍 敬 仲 之 芳 踪(蹤)
10	尊 姻 家 老 先 生
11	器 宇 宏 深
12	威 儀(仪) 高(高) 潔(洁)
13	欣 懷(怀) 御 李
14	窃(竊) 幸 依(兼) 葭
15	不 棄(弃) 蓬 門(门)
16	俯 從(丛) 水(冰) 議(议)
17	許 以 令 媛(媛) 清 妙 官

18	配為宗姪成貴(貴)者
19	儀(儀)慚(慚)不腆
20	礼(禮)愧大方
21	吉叶(時)良辰
22	敬行文定
23	欣觀(觀)雁拜
24	“亻+字”(伏)冀熊占
25	統(統)祈
26	尊慈俯賜(賜)
27	鑒(鑒)念不宣
28	峇(時)龍(龍)飛(飛)中華(華)民國(國)十二年六月式 (貳,二)日
29	夏曆(曆)癸亥年四月十八日俊(儁)卿再鞠躬
30	光前
31	特別製造

Appendix 3 - close-up photographs

Character 11.01 - 器 - has a distinctly different form than that of the computer-compatible equivalent.



Character 24.01 appears not to exist, and may have been incorrectly written.



In column 29, the 11th and 12th characters (5th and 4th from last characters) are slightly smaller, and written slightly offset to the right.

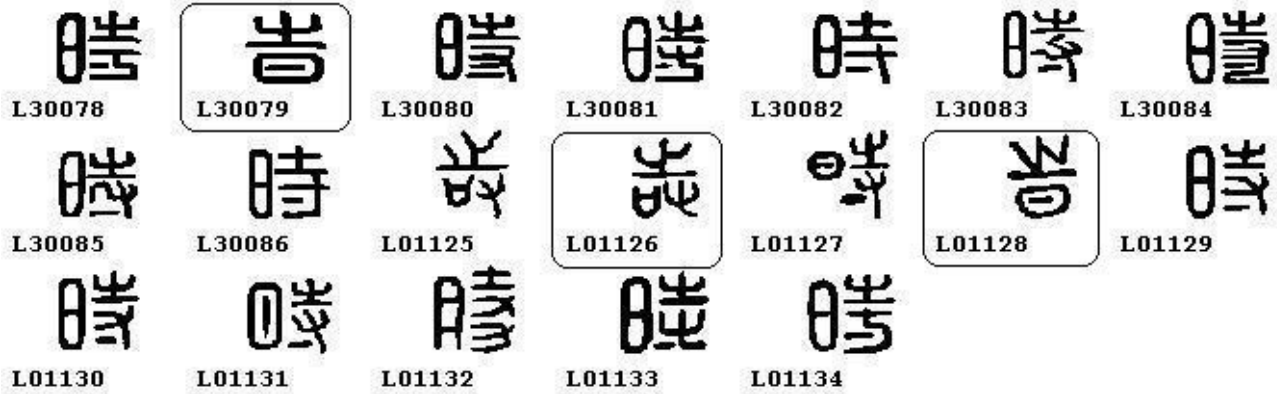


Appendix 4 - 𠄎 as an obscure variant form of 時

The etymology page [www.chineseetymology.org](http://www.chineseetymology.org) gives the following information on the various forms of 時.

Many of the others (particularly the first and last) are much more obviously related to the standard form 時, but the form 𠄎 found as the first character of line 28 of the scroll is apparently one of the known variants.

**LST Seal Characters**





Appendix 5 - the Chinese lunar calendar equivalents of the dates in 1923

The following is from a website about the Chinese lunar calendar: [www.hko.gov.hk/gts/time/calendar/pdf/1923e.pdf](http://www.hko.gov.hk/gts/time/calendar/pdf/1923e.pdf). It can be seen that 1923 was in fact gui-hai, and that 2 June 1923 was in fact the 18th day of the 4th lunar month of that year.



Gregorian-Lunar Calendar Conversion Table of 1923 (Gui-hai - year of the Pig)

Gregorian date	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Solar terms	
Jan Lunar date	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	12th Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Moderate Cold: 6 Severe Cold: 21	
Feb Lunar date	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1st Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13				Spring Commences: 5 Spring Showers: 19	
Mar Lunar date	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	2nd Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Insects Waken: 6 Vernal Equinox: 21	
Apr Lunar date	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	3rd Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Bright & Clear: 6 Corn Rain: 21	
May Lunar date	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	4th Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Summer Commences: 6 Corn Forms: 22	
Jun Lunar date	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	5th Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Corn on Ear: 7 Summer Solstice: 22	
Jul Lunar date	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	6th Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Moderate Heat: 8 Great Heat: 24	
Aug Lunar date	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	7th Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Autumn Commences: 8 End of Heat: 24
Sep Lunar date	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	8th Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	White Dew: 9 Autumnal Equinox: 24
Oct Lunar date	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	9th Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Cold Dew: 9 Frost: 24
Nov Lunar date	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	10th Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Winter Commences: 8 Light Snow: 23
Dec Lunar date	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	11th Lunar Month	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Heavy Snow: 8 Winter Solstice: 23

Remarks : 1. [ ] Represent the first day of the Lunar month 2. [ ] Sundays are in red