

A photograph of a person in traditional attire performing a dance on a green stage. The person is wearing a white top with blue patterns, a long teal skirt, white socks, and black high-heeled sandals with red and white stripes. The background is a solid green color.

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ARTICLES

- 'Let's make from now on the land of our mind broader!' with a hidden meaning of 'We had better stop here completely!'; from "Translation of a Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay; written of 1000 letters in Chinese character) poem(657th - 672nd letters)"** 10  
Hyeonhi R. Park, Jieun A. Kim, Kunjoo D. A. Kim, Jiah A. Kim, Sohwa T. Kim, Alain Hamon, Rosa Kim and Sangdeog A. Kim
- The Tcheonzamun (the thousand character essay)** 14  
Hyeonhi, R. Park, Jieun, A. Kim, Kunjoo, D.A. Kim, Jiah A. Kim, Sohwa, T. Kim, Alain Hamon, Rosa Kim and Sangdeog A. Kim

Essay

**‘Let’s make from now on the land of our mind broader!’  
with a hidden meaning of ‘We had better stop here  
completely!’; from “Translation of a Tcheonzamun(The  
Thousand Character Essay; written of 1000 letters in  
Chinese character) poem(657th - 672nd letters)”**

**Hyeonhi R. Park<sup>1</sup>, Jieun A. Kim<sup>2</sup>, Kunjoo D. A. Kim<sup>3</sup>, Jiah A. Kim<sup>4</sup>, Sohwa T. Kim<sup>5</sup>, Alain  
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This time, the Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay; written of 1000 letters in Chinese character) poem consists of 16 letters from 657th to 672nd characters. In the present report, we used two methods for translation; the first method is to use Chinese character meaning for the interpretation, and the second is to utilize Korean pronunciation for our interpretation. The researchers investigated the similarity of the meaning between these two methods. The researchers found some traces of Korean history during the translation, even though those writings were hidden in order to avoid the power of ruling authority on its special bilingual mask. Here, the special bilingual mask is utilized; that is a writing method in two language systems with Chinese meaning and Korean pronunciation systems. The meaning of those two writing systems was actually similar. But there is some difference; the Chinese meaning is soft, while the meaning on Korean pronunciation is real, sometimes full of agony, and sometimes it is to encourage Korean Maeg people! It is considered that Maeg country's people wrote the Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay; written of 1000 letters in Chinese character) and Tcheonzamun was passed to China before 500 B.C.

**Key words:** Tcheonzamun, Korean history, translation, Chinese, special bilingual mask.

INTRODUCTION

Dallet (1874) wrote that Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay; written of 1000 letters in Chinese

character) was widely used to teach Chinese characters to children both in old China and Korea, and he wrote

that Tcheonzamun (Tchou'en-ly on Canton writing) was used as the text book on Chi'n and Han (Tsin and Ha'n on Canton writing, respectively). Chi'n dynasty existed near Wei River in the sixth century B.C. (Fairbank and Reischauer, 1978). Wei River is a branch of Yellow River in China. This fact tells us that Tcheonzamun was brought into China from another country or written by somebody in China before 500 B.C.

It was said that there was no exact writing for Korean history during the old era (Dallet, 1874; Chung, 2013). But in an old Chinese dictionary (Kangxizidian, 1716), there were several records on Maeg people. And the researchers found that there are some traces of old Korean-Maeg people- in Tcheonzamun (Park and Kim, 2016a, b, c, d). The next is a part of writing on internet by Kim and Park (2016). Here, 'I' indicates Augustin Kim. "My special interest is Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay; written of 1000 letters in Chinese character) translation.

During these several years, I have been translating Tcheonzamun. On the translation, it is found that Tcheonzamun is composed of 63 poems and that each poem is composed of 16 letters (except the last poem which is composed of only 8 letters). Sometimes I seemed to read 'The book of Proverbs' or 'The Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)' in the Bible when investigating the meaning of Tcheonzamun poem. My wife, Hyeonhi Regina and me continue to write our essays including Tcheonzamun translation. One of those essays was published in a monthly Catholic journal in Republic of Korea (Kim and Park, 2015).

Some of the essays were submitted in the internet homepage of 'Daejeon Naedong Catholic Church in Republic of Korea' (cafe.naver.com/angolstar), and the others were submitted in the internet homepage of 'National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in Republic of Korea' (www.ofskorea.org). Though most of the essays were written in Korean, several essays were in English or in French, and two essays in Japanese. Each poem from Tcheonzamun encourages me to develop from present state, to know the preciousness of life, and to be subordinate to my spouse.

Is it strange for me to be subordinate to my wife? In my case it is 'yes', because I have not been a gentle husband to my wife Hyeonhi Regina. When we, 7-member family (our five children, my wife and me) were in France during the years of 1998-1999, my father Ilsoo Joseph Kim was seriously injured in an accident. At that time three of my family members (the fifth child Soхва Therese, Hyeonhi and me) came back to Korea to see my father's last moment. After his funeral, I was desperate and the joy in me was little! If not for my wife's support, I could not have fulfilled my work in France as a

Post-doctoral student. During the translation of the poem from Tcheonzamun, I felt that my father Ilsoo Joseph was telling me kind words as follows;

"My favorite son Sangdeog Augustin, please stand firm! You must be the strong father to your children, and you have to be the reliable husband to your wife. As you know, I love my five grand-children and my daughter in-law Hyeonhi Regina very much. There is in the world only one who can do this precious role, it is you! And I do promise it to you, my son, certainly I will support you! Therefore, please be well from your difficulties in your life! My loving son Sangdeog Augustin, first of all, I want to see you yourself live your life joyfully!"

We, Hyeonhi and Augustin, went on 8 October 2016 to the Mass of Father Jean Blanc, a French missionary of Missions Etrangeres de Paris. He works in Daejeon on the convent of Congregation of the Sacred Word. The following is a part of his sermon during the Mass on the dawn.

"Saint Mary appeared many times. She appeared in front of children. At Lourdes in France Saint Mary appeared in front of Saint Bernadette in the year 1858, and the Lady said to Bernadette "Please pray!" Saint Mary appeared again at Fatima in Portugal at 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the Lady said, "Pray for peace!" Saint Mary appeared at Banneux and Beauraing in Belgium in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the Lady said, "Pray please"

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researchers used a HanSeogBong Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay; written of 1000 letters in Chinese character) (Kim, 2002). HanSeogBong is the name of a famous calligrapher in 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. in Korea (Choseon dynasty), and he wrote the Tcheonzamun in his own calligraphy. Tcheonzamun translation into Korean language (Kim, 2002) is similar to the English version on internet in United Kingdom (Sturman. Edited by Cambridge Chinese Classics, www.camcc.org, 2009). Kangxizidian (1716) published in China was used. And in the present report, we used two methods for translation; the first method is to use Chinese character meaning for the interpretation, and the second is to utilize Korean pronunciation for our interpretation. And the researchers investigated the similarity of the meaning between these two methods.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At first, the researchers are going to translate Tcheonzamun to Korean version (Kim, 2002).

(人+叔)載南畝: We start (人+叔) to cultivate crops (載) in

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sun-lighted field (南畝).

我藝黍稷: I(我) will do my best (藝) to plant millet (黍) and wild millet (稷).

稅熟貢新: When the crop is ripe (熟), I will prepare the harvested thing for the tax of the country(稅) and also prepare the newly-harvested crop(新) in order to sacrifice for my ancestors(貢).

勸賞黜陟: I gave the present (賞) to the person who had worked hard (勸), and I expelled the one (黜陟) (who had been lazy).

The meaning in British version (Sturman, Source: www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html) is similar to that of Korean version. This time, the Tcheonzamun poem consisted of 16 letters from 657<sup>th</sup> character to 672<sup>nd</sup> character, and the title of the poem is "Let's make from now on the land of our mind broader!" (- / V `) shows the tone of Chinese characters.

657-660 속재남무 (SugZeNamMu; Korean alphabets) (人+叔)載南畝(V) (Chinese characters).

If you want to harvest in good quantity the crop (人+叔) which you have sown (載), you had better plant the seed (畝) in good soil (南). "If the soil is good, the harvest will be favorable!"

661-664 아예서직 (AYeSepZig) 我(V)藝( )黍(V)稷( )  
Not truth! You said that "if I capture good soil, all is well!" You, other country's people, took from us good soil which originally we, the people of Maeg country, have owned. But we are going to have the more favorable things than you have now.

"Our brethren, I am telling you the thing that we are going to do. Let's make from now on the land of our mind broader! And let's be in prosperity better than our enemy is! If we keep in mind this thing, we will be so"

Until now I used to be angry with others (我), from now on I shall do good practice in my mind and become soft in human relations (藝). I will take out weed-like temper from my mind(稷) and I will change my rough characters into soft and good-crop like appearance(黍).

665-668 태속공신(TaeSugKongSin) 稅( )熟( )貢( )新(-)  
When crop is harvested, we give something to our senior people (稅). This is our custom now, but it is not good. If I were such a senior or high person, I will not take such a selfish thinking. How do I prepare sufficient food for my family with good techniques (熟)? Be not rude to others (新). Please think that this thing is a very precious treasure (貢) and do it with sincere carefulness.

The next is a talk between Augustin and Hyeonhi on 15

September 2016. It was the day of Tchuseog, one of the greatest feasts in Korea.

Augustin: Darling Hyeonhi, the Maeg people who have written Tcheonzamun have made Chinese characters.

Hyeonhi: They have selected letters from Chinese characters and made the Tcheonzamun. Unless the Chinese characters, they could not do it.

Hyeonhi: Therefore the Chinese characters must have been previously made.

Augustin: You are right! Anyway, Maeg people have made the Chinese characters and then they have written Tcheonzamun.

Augustin: They used Chinese characters exactly in Tcheonzamun.

669-672 권상출척 (KwonSangTchulTcheog)  
勸( )賞(V)黜( )陟( )

If I give some good present with praise to someone (賞), there will be a pleasure in his mind with full energy to do everything (勸)! But if another person (Yeon) is very good in his(or her) activity and he can advance well (陟), you had better do not treat him respectfully in public (黜).

Kangxizidian (1716) wrote that "What a good thing that Maeg lives, even though their living place is situated in the barren thing!" The Chinese people valued the behavior of Maeg people greatly.

And the researchers tried those four Chinese characters on Korean pronunciations. They think that this poem's period is around 661 B.C. when Maeg country was defeated by Yeon country (Chung, 2013).

Korean alphabets (Korean pronunciation) Chinese characters (Chinese pronunciation)

속재남무 (SugZeNamMu) (人+叔)載南畝 (*chu zai nan mu*) In modern Korean language, it is '숫제 나무' SusZeNaMu (The meaning is 'there are only trees!').

아예서직 (AYeSeoZig) 我藝黍稷 (*wo yi shu ji*). In modern Korean language, it is '아예 서지' AyeSeoZi (The meaning is 'we had better stop here completely!')  
태속공신 (TaeSugKongSin) 稅熟貢新 (*shui shou gong xin*). In modern Korean language, it is '되 죽 것으이' DoeZugKeosSui (The meaning is 'we are deadly tired!').  
권상출척 (KwonSangTchulTcheog) 勸賞黜陟 (*quan shang chu zhi*). In modern Korean language, it is '금새 죽지' KumSaeZukZi (The meaning is 'we are going to die now!')



At that time, Maeg people were truly desperate. Because they were fleeing from Yeon country's people. The environment from the translation through Korean pronunciation was much darker than that of the translation through Chinese character. But this one is more actual for expressing their emotion.

The researchers found some traces of Korean history during their Tcheonzamun translation, even though those writings were hidden in order to avoid the power of ruling authority on its special bilingual mask. Here, the special bilingual mask is utilized; that is a writing method in two language systems with Chinese meaning and Korean pronunciation systems. The meaning of those two writing systems was actually similar. But there is some difference; the Chinese meaning is soft, while the meaning on Korean pronunciation is real, sometimes full of agony, and sometimes it is to encourage Korean Maeg people!

It is fine that they could express similar meanings with different writing systems! How clever the Maeg country's people are! We are very proud of our ancestor, Maeg people of 2500 years ago.

"Oh our ancestor! You are very good!" At this condition we usually say, "Fighting!" But if we speak this foreign language, our ancestor, Maeg people, will not be happy. We know that they want us to use Korean language, the precious treasure which they have kept from more than 2500 years ago. And they desperately wanted to preserve this Korean language even using the bilingual mask.

Kangxizidian (1716) wrote in a pitiful mood that "the language of Maeg people does not exist at present." But here in Korea we speak the same language freely, even though the Maeg people must have written Tcheonzamun in Korean language pronunciation system secretly.

## Conclusion

The researchers found some traces of Korean history during their Tcheonzamun translation. Here, the special bilingual mask was utilized; that is a writing method in two language systems with Chinese meaning and Korean pronunciation systems. The meaning of those two writing systems was actually similar. But there is some difference; the Chinese meaning is soft, while the meaning in Korean pronunciation is real, sometimes full of agony, and sometimes it is to encourage Korean Maeg people!

It is considered that Maeg country's people wrote the Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay; written of 1000 letters in Chinese character) and Tcheonzamun and was passed to China before 500 B.C.

## Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Essay

## The Tcheonzamun (the thousand character essay)

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**'To our enemy Yeon' with an apparent title of 'If you want to solve this bad relation between somebody and you' is the theme of this study. The present research is carried out during the translation of a poem (721st to 736th) in Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay). In this article, the researchers showed two sides of Tcheonzamun (the thousand character essay) interpretation: one is through Chinese character; the other is through Korean pronunciation. The researchers wanted to know if the meaning of the two interpretations was similar. And the researchers observed which translations of the two is the better one for knowing the real intention of the author. When the author of Tcheonzamun wrote the poem, did he think Korean pronunciation (the words of Maeg country) at first or the meaning of Chinese characters is more important? The researchers think that 'The Tcheonzamun's author wanted to write the general meaning and the title in Chinese characters, while he wanted to express his real intention in Korean pronunciation. The meaning of Korean pronunciation is written for his colleagues and for his descendents to express his real mind. Even though the author expressed in Chinese characters politely to solve the bad relation with somebody, the author showed in the poem his deep hatred for Yeon country's people through Korean pronunciations.**

**Key words:** Chinese character, translation, essay, poem, interpretation.

### INTRODUCTION

Reischauer and Fairbank (1972) wrote that:

"For the humanist interested in art, literature, philosophy and religion, the ancient societies of China, Japan and Korea hold the mirror up to our own Western culture", that "We know very little about the social and political

organization of the early Korean tribes", and that "The Koreans had proved brilliantly creative in adapting Chinese civilization in earlier centuries, but in the late Yi dynasty (It was to remain in existence for 518 years from 1392 to 1910, almost twice as long as any of the dynasties of imperial China), the dead weight of the

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Chinese language and the heavy hand of China's classical tradition seem to have inhibited all creative endeavor in Korea."

Dallet (1874) wrote that "In China there were several books for a child who started to study the characters. The most common book for the children in China to study Chinese character is the Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay, Tchouen-ly in Cantonese pronunciation in the 19th century and Qian Zi Wen in Mandarin), and this dated from Chin and Han (Tsin and Ha'n in Cantonese pronunciation in the 19th century)."

In Republic of Korea, Tcheonzamun (book of 'The Thousand Character Essay') is sold in each book store and in street store (Kim, 2002); therefore nearly everyone has a Tcheonzamun book at home. But the Tcheonzamun book does not give the Korean people special interest, because the meaning is difficult. And this is filled with unknown Chinese names of man and those of places. The researchers saw that it is similar in English translation (Sturman. source: [www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html](http://www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html)). The researchers suggested through internet that Tcheonzamun has been written by ancient Korean, Maeg country's author (Park and Kim, 2015; Park and Kim, 2016 a, b; Kim and Park, 2016 a, b).

In this study, the researchers showed two sides of Tcheonzamun interpretation; one is through Chinese character; the other is through Korean pronunciation. The researchers wanted to know if the meaning of the two interpretations was similar. And the researchers observed which translations of the two is the better one for knowing the real intention of the author.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researchers used the common Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay) book (Kim, 2002) which can be bought in Korean street as a Korean version of Tcheonzamun. And the present researchers utilized Sturman's Theonzamun (Source: [www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html](http://www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html)) as an English version. The present researchers investigated and tried to find out the appropriate method for translating Tcheonzamun poem (Kim and Park, 27 February 2013).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There is no research until now about this subject, because all Koreans believe that Tcheonzamun is written by Chinese (Park and Kim, 2016 a). And no one thought that the Tcheonzamun has 63 poems in 1,000 characters.

Furthermore, no one wrote about the Korean languages in Tcheonzamun. It is the present researchers at first time that have found the poems in Tcheonzamun. And the present researchers have found that the whole Tcheonzamun is written in Korean language (We found that these 5 continuous poems are written in Korean language until now).

At first, the present researchers translated into English the common meaning on Korean version of our present poem (721st to 736th) in Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay) (Kim, 2002).

兩疏見機: After the two men, SoKwang and SoSu, have reported the machine to the King, they returned to a local, a country side.

解組誰逼: Who can scold them because of their resignation?

索居閑處: After their resign they spent their lives freely in a peaceful place.

沈默寂寥: We must in public do carefully our behavior and saying.

This same part of the Tcheonzamun in English version (Sturman 2009, Source: [www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html](http://www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html)) is not exactly the same with that of Korean version earlier mentioned, but the whole meaning of the two versions is similar.

Park and Kim (2012) found that Tcheonzamun poem is composed of 16 characters. After that, the present researchers found that there are two systems of poem composition in Tcheonzamun (Park and Kim, 2012; Kim and Park, 2016 b). Each line of 4 Chinese characters is composed of two sentences; (verb A + noun B, verb C + noun D), or (noun E + verb F, noun G + verb H).

Most of the poems in Tcheonzamun are constructed on the first type; (verb A + noun B, verb C + noun D). The present researchers have translated them as follows; If we want to do (B) a thing (A), we must do (C) the other thing (D). And the translating method for the second type (noun E + verb F, noun G + verb H) was contrary to the first type.

The present researchers have translated them as follows; If we want a thing (G) to be done (H), we do (F) another thing (E). And there is a difference between Chinese language and Korean language. Each Chinese character shows its own independent meaning(s), Korean word on the contrary starts to express its own meaning as a group or a block of several Korean characters. The present researchers have also found that there are bilingual efforts by the Tcheonzamun author to hide their real emotion (Park and Kim, 2016 a; Kim and Park, 2016 a).

Reischauer and Fairbank (1972) wrote that in the far north around modern Peking (Beijing) and in southern Manchuria appeared the state of Yen (It is called Yeon in Korea), which probably was of "barbarian" origin though it claimed descent from the Chou line (of old China). This poem composed of 16 Chinese characters from 721st to 736th. (- / V `) shows the Chinese characters tone. The present researchers begin from now on with the translation through Chinese character (No. of character; Korean alphabet; Korean pronunciation; Chinese

character; translation).

721-724 양소견기(YangSoGyeonKi) 兩(V)疏(-)見(〃)機(-)  
If you have a bad relation(疏) with somebody(兩), there must have been(見) a reason(機).

725-728 해조수벽(HaeZoSuByeog) 解(V)組(V)誰(/)逼(-)  
If you want to solve(解) this bad relation between somebody and you(組), some one(誰) must come to you, but who wants to come to you(逼)?

729-732 색거한처(SaegKeoHanTcheo) 索(V)居(-)  
)閑(/)處(V) If you search(索) for some place to stay(居), you hope there(處) must be calm without battle(閑).

733-736 침묵적요(TchimMugZeogYo) 沈(/)默(〃)寂(/)寥(/)  
If you want to be easy in your mind(寥) without loud and unhappy voices(寂), the angry expression(沈) must disappear(默).

The next is the interpretation through Korean pronunciation (No. of character; Korean alphabet; Korean pronunciation; Chinese character; translation)

721-724 양소견기(YangSoGyeonKi) 兩疏見機 In modern Korean, it is 'AngSugYeonEge (양숙 연에게)' with the meaning of 'To our enemy Yeon.'

725-728 해조수벽(HaeZoSuByeog) 解組誰逼 In modern Korean, it is 'HaeZyeosEuMyeon (해 줏으면)' with the meaning of 'I hope that you will do that to them!'

729-732 색거한처(SaegKeoHanTcheo) 索居閑處 In modern Korean, it is 'SaeGgiHanTae (새끼한테)' with the meaning of 'To bastard!'

733-736 침묵적요 (TchimMugZeogYo) 沈默寂寥 In modern Korean, it is 'TchimEulZwoYo (침을 줘요)' with the meaning of 'Give them saliva!'

This is full of truly rough languages! Now it is difficult to understand this poem's meaning. We can not certify that this interpret is wrong or right. Therefore, it is necessary for the present researchers to explain the theme of the other poems. Here, the theme of those poems is the meaning through which Korean pronunciation interpret.

The theme of another poem (673rd to 688th) is 'we seriously defeated!' (Kim and Park, 2016 a), and the

theme of the following poem (689th to 704th) is 'Fight again!' (Park and Kim, 2016 b).

In another poem (705th to 720th) just before this poem, the Tcheonzamun author tried and tried again in order to give full bless to their descendants (Kim and Park, 2016 a), as shown on 'Edel Weiss' song in the film of 'Sound of Music'. But now in the present poem (721st to 736th) the author gave malediction, full of curse, to his enemy, Yeon country's people.

When the author of Tcheonzamun wrote the poem, did he think Korean pronunciation (the words of Maeg country) at first or the meaning of Chinese characters is more important? The researchers think that 'The Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay) author wanted to write the general meaning and the title in Chinese characters, while he wanted to express his real intention in Korean pronunciation. The meaning of Korean pronunciation is written for his colleagues and for his descendents to express his real mind.

## Conclusion

When the author of Tcheonzamun wrote the poem, did he think Korean pronunciation (the words of Maeg country) at first or the meaning of Chinese characters is more important? The present researchers think that 'The Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay) author wanted to write the general meaning and the title in Chinese characters, while he wanted to express his real intention in Korean-pronunciation. The meaning of Korean pronunciation is written for his colleagues and for his descendents to express his real mind. Even though the author expressed in Chinese characters politely to solve the bad relation with somebody, the author showed in the poem his deep hatred towards Yeon country's people through Korean pronunciations.

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## Conflicts of interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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