

Essay

**‘The son and the daughter of Maeg country, I am very proud of you!’ with a title ‘I will do my best for my children as if I stood in front of God!’: - Translation of the poem on Tcheonzamun (the book of ‘The Thousand Character Essay’), from 689th to 704th characters**

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Tcheonzamun, (book of ‘The Thousand Character Essay’), is so famous in China and in Korea that a lot of common phrases utilized in the practical life are have come from the book. The researcher translated the poem of Tcheonzamun. It is a poem composed of 16 letters from 689th to 704th. It was done both by using Chinese characters and through Korean pronunciation. The researcher found that in on this poem, nearly all of Korean pronunciations of those Chinese characters are utilized in the modern Korean language. The author of Tcheonzamun expressed through Chinese character the common sense in the first line of the four lines of this poem,; ‘We must speak good in order to obtain confidence from the people’. While the author constantly on the next three lines wrote opposite things, ‘; the most important thing is not the saying but the behavior of the person’. The meaning of the translation through Chinese character is as follows; ‘I will do my best for my children as if I stood in front of God!’. And the meaning of the interpretation through Korean pronunciation is connected to the previous poem from 673rd to 688th characters. The Tcheonzamun author has consoled his defeated sons or colleagues from the battle on the previous poem, and he continued the advice to his son’s in the present poem. The brief meaning of the present poem through Korean pronunciation is as follows,; ‘The son and daughter of Maeg country, I am very proud of you!’

**Key words:** Tcheonzamun (book of ‘The Thousand Character Essay’), poem, Korean pronunciation, Maeg country’s people, 16 letters from 689th to 704th.

## INTRODUCTION

Tcheonzamun is so famous in China and Korea that a lot of phrases have come from the book. In Republic of Korea, Tcheonzamun is sold in every bookstore and street; therefore nearly everybody has a Tcheonzamun at home. The Koreans used to read Tcheonzamun in order to study fundamental Chinese characters, and in the translation of each 4 characters there are many names of Chinese men and places. So the book is not interesting and we the Koreans cannot well understand its meaning. The researchers saw that it is very similar to that in English translation (Sturman. source: [www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html](http://www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html)).

The researchers have utilized the book Tcheonzamun at home for studying Chinese. And the researchers found that Tcheonzamun is the collection of 63 poems, each of which is composed of 16 letters (except 63<sup>rd</sup> poem) (Park and Kim, 2012) and it was really interesting for them (Kim et al., 2013). Therefore the researchers started to translate the poem of Tcheonzamun, 'The Thousand Character Essay' (Kim and Park, 2016). Thus, this time the researchers translated the poem by using the meaning of Chinese characters and Korean pronunciation.

The researchers focused principally on Maeg people who seem to be the ancestors of modern Korean people through Tcheonzamun translation.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researchers used a HanSeogBong Tcheonzamun (Kim, 2002), whose translation is similar to that published in United Kingdom on internet (Sturman. Source: [www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html](http://www.oocities.org/npsturman/tce.html)) (Edited by Cambridge Chinese Classics, [www.camcc.org](http://www.camcc.org) 2017). Kangxizidian (Zin BE, Hyeog H, Ai BA, Na CA, Wang IZ, 1716) was also used. The researchers investigated and tried to find out the appropriate method for translating Tcheonzamun poem (Kim and Park, 2012, 2013; Kim et al., 2013; Park and Kim, 2016). The researchers used Chinese internet data (2 January 2017, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thousand\\_Character\\_Classic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thousand_Character_Classic)).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the translation from European language to Chinese language was difficult (Cheng and Kalinowski, 2013), it has not been easy for the Koreans to translate Tcheonzamun (book of 'The Thousand Character Essay') (Park & Kim, 31 May 2012). But the reason of the difficulty is not only the different language system but the origin of the Tcheonzamun (Kim & Park, 2016).

The Thousand Character Classic (Chinese: 千字文; Qiānzìwén), also known as the Thousand Character Text, is a Chinese poem used as a primer for

teaching Chinese characters to children from the sixth century onward. And one says that Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty (502–549) commissioned Zhou Xingsi (simplified Chinese: 周兴嗣; traditional Chinese: 周興嗣, 470–521) to compose this poem for his prince to practice calligraphy (2 January 2017, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thousand\\_Character\\_Classic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thousand_Character_Classic)).

And the present researchers proposed a hypothesis that Tcheonzamun was written by Korean ancients Maeg people and the book was spread into China around 500 B.C. (Park and Kim, 2016). And the researchers want to insist that "If there is Talmud in Israel, there is Tcheonzamun in Korea". Because all the 63 poems continuously have the expression of giving courage to weak persons through Chinese character translation (Kim et al., 2013). But this hypothesis is not established as a theory till date.

The last line (four characters) of the previous poem was LoKyeomKeunTchig (勞謙謹勅). It means 'utilize words well' (Kim and Park, 2016). The Tcheonzamun author continues to write the topic 'word'.

The poem consists of 16 letters from 689<sup>th</sup> to 704<sup>th</sup>. The number is the order for the four letters from the book of The Thousand Character Essay (Tcheonzamun in Korean pronunciation). The left side are Korean alphabets and their pronunciations of each 4 Chinese characters, and the right side are Chinese characters (Chinese pronunciation). Order of Korean alphabets (Korean pronunciation); Chinese characters (Chinese pronunciation) 689-692 영음찰리 (YeongEumTchalRi) 聆音察理 (ling yin cha li).

If you want to understand (聆) the words (音) in a style of Yeon country, you must certify (察) his saying is reasonable (理) or not.

Yeon country is a neighbor to the researchers' ancestor's country, Maeg; and Yeon seemed to be the enemy of Maeg for a long time. It is important for Yeon to speak reasonably; in other words, to speak well is a very important value in Yeon. Fairbank and Reischauer (1978) wrote that Yen (in Korean pronunciation Yeon) situated close to the area of the researchers' old country which seemed to be Maeg in the period of 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

693-696 감모판색 (GamMoPanSaeg) 鑑貌辨色 (jian mao bian se). How do you think (鑑) in a way of our Maeg country (貌)? We observe his behavior or the way of his life (色), and we know his mind (辨). For us, it is very important how Maeg people do their life. This description

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about Maeg country is true, because such praise was shown many times in a Chinese dictionary, Kangxizidian (Zin et al., 1716).

697-670 이궐가유 (IGwyeolGaYu) 貽厥嘉猷 (yi jue jia you).

If we are going to show this good behavior of ours (厥) to our descendants and transfer it to them as a present (貽), we must design this plan (猷) beautifully and smartly(嘉).

701-704 먼기지식 (MyeonGiZiSig) 勉其祗植 (mian qi zhi zhi)

If we are both prudence and practice (勉) the word which we have spoken (其), we will do our best (植) as if we stood in front of God (祗)!

Though Korean history before the 1st century (AD) is absolutely unknown (Dallet, 1874), we the Koreans feel and thank our ancestor, Maeg people, for their deep love to us the Koreans, their descendents.

The difference of grammar between Chinese and Korean languages is significant. The order of Chinese language is Subject + verb + object, while that of Korean language is Subject + object + verb. The researchers came to know in Tcheonzamun translation that there is a big difference between Chinese language and Tcheonzamun writing (Park and Kim, 2016). The order of Chinese characters in Tcheonzamun is as follows; (noun A + verb B, noun C + verb D). Therefore, if this -4 character- sentences were Chinese languages, we could translate like this; someone A does something B, and then, someone C does something D. But the present researchers were able to succeed in translating as follows; If we are going to do (B) something A, we must do (D) something C. It is very different from the system of Chinese language.

The next is the interpretation through Korean pronunciation of the same poem from Tcheonzamun.

Order of Korean alphabets (Korean pronunciation) and Chinese characters. Korean alphabets changed into the modern Korean (and its pronunciation).

689-692 영음찰리 (YeongEumTchalRi) 聆音察理  
연을차라(YeonEul TchaRa) Break the Yeon country ('Yeon' means the country name, 'YeonEul' is the objective form of 'Yeon'. 'TchaRa' is the imperative form of 'Tchada', and 'Tchada' means to kick something or somebody).

693-696 감모판색 (GamMoPanSaeg) 鑑貌辨色  
감어(GamEo). 팔 써(Pal Sseo) - Bind (the enemy's neck), and use your arms (to press the enemy's neck)!

('GamEo' is the imperative form of 'Gamda' which means to bind. 'Pal' is an arm, and 'Sseo' is the imperative form of 'Sseuda', which means to use something. You can understand this behavior well if you imagine the Judo experience)

697-670 이궐가유 (IGwyeolGaYu) 貽厥嘉猷 이궐거야 (IGilGeoYa). – You will gain in the battle! ('IGilGeoYa' is the future form of 'Igida' which means to gain the game or battle.)

701-704 먼기지식 (MyeonGiZiSig) 勉其祗植 맥의 자식 (MaegEui ZaSig). – The son and the daughter of Maeg country, I am very proud of you! ('Maeg' is the country, considered the origin of Korean people. MaegEui is the possessive form of 'Maeg' country, and 'Zasig' is child or children of the family).

The researchers found that almost all the Korean pronunciations of these Chinese characters from 689<sup>th</sup> to 704<sup>th</sup> pages of the poem are utilized in the modern Korean. Therefore, the researchers focused principally on Maeg country's people who seem to be the ancestor of modern Korean through Tcheonzamun translation.

## Conclusion

Tcheonzamun (book of 'The Thousand Character Essay') is so famous in China and Korea that a lot of phrases are from the book. The researchers translated Tcheonzamun (the book of 'The Thousand Character Essay'), a poem composing of 16 letters from 689<sup>th</sup> to 704<sup>th</sup>. It was done by using Chinese characters and Korean pronunciation. In the appearance, it is seen that 'If we are going to show this good behavior of ours to our descendants and transfer it to them as present, we must design this plan beautifully and smartly.' While in the real sense, it is an encouragement to their descendents such as 'you will gain in the battle!' The author of Tcheonzamun expressed through Chinese character common sense in the first line of this poem, 'we must speak good in order to obtain people's confidence'. While the author constantly on the next three lines wrote opposite things, 'the most important thing is not the saying but the behavior of the person'. The meaning of the translation through Chinese character is as follows, 'I will do my best for my children as if I stood in front of God!' And the meaning of the present interpretation through Korean pronunciation is connected to the previous poem, from 673<sup>rd</sup> to 688<sup>th</sup> characters.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The researchers declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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