

Original Research Article

## My father Ilsoo Joseph Kim and Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay)

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**Abstract:** This is a poem of 16 letters from 177th character to 192nd character of Tcheonzamun. The researchers translated the poem Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay) on expressing their father or grand-father Ilsoo Joseph Kim. The Teacher of Tcheonzamun in this poem gives us his strict advice; "You will lose time if you continue to brag of what you have done!" As shown on the Ki (器) character, the researchers want to express the value of Tcheonzamun with large scale (大) of saying or mouth (口) on 1, 2, 3, 4 directions (口 口 口 口) as "Tcheonzamun was written by ancient Koreans.

**Keywords:** Ancient Koreans, my father Ilsoo Joseph Kim, Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay), value of Tcheonzamun.

## INTRODUCTION

Dallet [1] wrote that Tchouen-ly (Tcheonzamun in Korean pronunciation) was utilized in Tsin (Qin, Ch'in) empire. Tsin (Qin, Ch'in) was the first unified empire in 246 BC in China [2].

Meanings of Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay) were similar both by Kim [3] and by Sturman [4]. The former translation is Korean version and the latter is British version, respectively. Even though they were translated on the different regions, the meaning is nearly same. And they are not organic. In other words, there is no regular system for the translation of Tcheonzamun. While Kim and Park [5] found that Tcheonzamun has a regular and organic system; a) Continuous 16 letters compose a poem, b) the first line of 4 letters shows general notion and the second and the third and fourth lines (each of 4 letters) expresses the opposite meaning to the first line and shows the more wide meaning, c) the poem has a very deep and really warm meanings. And Park *et al.* [6, 12] found that d) there are Korean pronunciations in each letter of Tcheonzamun and that e) there are some relations between the translation through Chinese character and the interpret through Korean pronunciation. But the meaning through Korean pronunciation has direct and strong meaning of sorrow or joy while the meaning through Chinese character had a more polite and softer meaning than that of Korean pronunciation.

And the present researchers supposed a hypothesis that Tcheonzamun was written by Korean ancients -Maeg people- and the book was spread into China before 500 B.C. [7]. Maeg people (ancient Korean) might have written Tcheonzamun [8]. The first possible period for Tcheonzamun composition is after 661 BC when Maeg people have been greatly defeated by Yeon people (Chinese people who had lived near Beijing) [9], and some of Maeg people had been captured by Chinese and they worked as public servants in China [10]. The second possible period for Tcheonzamun composition is after being conquered of Shang (or Eun)

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country by Chou around 1050 BC [2]. The second suggestion was carried out by the present researchers [6].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a poem of 16 letters from 177th character to 192nd character of Tcheonzamun. The researchers translate the poem.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thank you very much amen, our Lord! Amen, you gave me this good present through my wife Hyeonhi, and we really thank you! A certain publisher in USA asked me on 7 July 2015 to write a brief presentation about works of one of the researchers, Augustin (Sangdeog Augustin Kim). Augustin got in high spirits and he has written it from that day (7 July 2015) until one day before the dead line of the submission (19 August 2015). But when the brief presentation for Augustin was published on 1 January 2016, there were only three things; his hobby is singing, badminton, reading.

However at that time Augustin was really joyful and truly glad with the brief presentation, so the researchers introduced a part of the writing as follows. And the title is fixed as 'Tcheonzamun (The Thousand Character Essay) and my father Ilsoo Joseph Kim', because in the brief presentation of his works it was much described about Tcheonzamun and about his father Ilsoo Joseph.

A part of the next writing was shown in an internet site [7] and in an article [8] of the present researchers.

### Hobbies and Special Interests

(1) Singing, (2) playing badminton, (3) talking with my students in the class, (4) reading the Bible in foreign languages (in Chinese, Japanese, English, French), (5) Tcheonzamun translation.

And 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 I have 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 I investigated the meaning of Tcheonzamun poem. My wife Hyeonhi Regina and me, we continue to write our essays including Tcheonzamun translation. One of those essays was published in a monthly Catholic journal in Republic of Korea [11]. 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). Each poem from Tcheonzamun encourages me to develop from my present state, to know the preciousness of my life, and to be subordinate to my wife. 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-membered family (our five children, my wife and me), were in France during the years of 1998-1999, my father Ilsoo Joseph Kim was seriously damaged with an accident.

At that time three of my family (the fifth child Sohwa Therese, my wife Hyeonhi and me) came back to Korea to see my father's last moment. After his funeral I felt desperate and the joy of my life became really little remained! If there were not condolences from my wife Hyeonhi, I could not have fulfilled my work in France as a Post-doctoral student.

During my translation of the poem from Tcheonzamun, I feel that my father Ilsoo Joseph is telling me kindly 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 that 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!"

### Additional Comments

(1) We talk most frequently at our home next five sentences; a) Thank you! b) I am very proud of you! c) Think positive! d) Look on the bright side! e) We are searching for joyfulness, we are eager for peacefulness, and we love each other during the life!

These sayings were proposed and are carried out by my wife Hyeonhi Regina.

(2) I love my mother and father in-laws, Hirye Sarah Kim and Yeonghag Park.

(3) I thank very much the person who has recommended me to the certain publisher in USA even though I don't know his or her name. Also I appreciate deeply to the publisher in USA ('MarquisWho'sWho').

Now it is time to translate Tcheonzamun. This is a poem of 16 letters from 177th character to 192nd character of Tcheonzamun. Hyeonhi and me Augustin, we were trying to interpret the poem while we prayed to God together. We prayed that "Our Lord, please help us to interpret well this poem of Tcheonzamun!" The title of today's poem is 'It will come to be favourable if we

imagine that the result will be good!

Order of characters, pronunciation on Korean language, Chinese character, the meaning of the 4 characters 177-180 Mang Dam Pi Dan 罔談彼短. If you want that somebody (彼) does not prosper or he/she will fail in one's life (短), please do not (罔) speak ill of him/her or do not blame him/her at all (談).

It means that one cannot advance well without the strong or hard or ill-tempered advice. 181-184 Mi Si Ki Zang 靡恃己長. If you (己) want to be a prosperous and well grown-up man or woman (長), it will be accomplished according to your dream. There is one thing which you must do: You do not (靡) speak well of yourself (恃) in front of others.

185-188 Sin SA Ka Bog 信使可覆. Do you want now to be able (可) to accomplish completely the thing (覆)? In order to this, believe firmly that 'It will be well done' (信)! Then, it will be carried out as you have wanted (使).

The next day was a feast of night of the biggest moon. As we ate peanut (eating peanut is a tradition on the feast in Korea) on the night of 21 February 2016, Augustin told about this translation of the third line(185th-188th letters) to Sohwa Therese the youngest in my family and to Hyeonhi. Then Hyeonhi told me that "It's too difficult!" And she told that "Please speak easily the meaning as I tell!". Then Sohwa spoke after her mother Hyeonhi's saying. "If you think that a thing will be done well, the thing will be carried out favorably. And Hyeonhi spoke out another thing; "If you think that some not-tasty food is delicious, the food will taste good." Then she said that this is "Think positive!"

189-192 Ki Yok Nan Lyang 器欲難量. Do you want to become a great man or a great woman whose capacity cans not (難) be calculated (量)? In order to do this, you must desire (欲) this with your whole heart and with your behavior.

Yes, it is. I will not keep speaking well of me! I have no time to do such a stupid thing continuously. Foolish thing here is to consume a lot of time in speaking well of myself. Instead of this, the precious time must be spent for me in another action to develop myself. The Teacher of Tcheonzamun in this poem gives us his strict advice; "You will lose time if you continue to brag of what you have done!"

All of these splendid things came from Jesus, the Lord of us two persons. We deeply thank you, amen! We, me and my wife Hyeonhi, wrote on 22 Augustin 2017.

## CONCLUSION

As shown on the Ki (器) character, the researchers want to express the value of Tcheonzamun with large scale (大) of saying or mouth (口) on 1, 2, 3, 4 directions (口 口 口 口) as "Tcheonzamun was written by ancient Koreans."

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