

**Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa 조선상사주식회사 [Archive of a North
Korean corporation]**

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



**Asian Division, Library of Congress, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
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Collection Summary

Title: Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa [Archive of a North Korean corporation]

Span Dates: 1947-1950

Call No.: Koreanmss01

Creator: Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa

Extent: 3,400 items

Extent: 20 containers

Language: Collection material in Korean, Korean (Chinese scripts), Chinese, Japanese, and English.

Location: Asian Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020657372>

Summary: First international trading company by the North Korean government. Correspondence, reports, invoices, statistics, meeting and planning notes, agendas, memoranda, personnel records, and other organizational records documenting the activities of Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa (Archive of a North Korean corporation). Also includes material relating to Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe (North Korea Overseas Chinese Federation) which document the experiences of overseas Chinese in North Korea.

Provenance

The provenance for the records of the Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa, the first international trading company by the North Korean government, is unknown. Upon discovering these records in the Asian Division stacks, it could not be determined when the collection was received by the Library of Congress.

Processing History

Due to the fragile quality of the records, the Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa collection was sent to the Conservation Division for treatment and re-housing from 2017 to 2019. Originally, the materials were bound into 45 items. Each bound item was disbound, treated and re-housed in custom made boxes. The collection was arranged and described by Asian Division's Korean reference specialist from 2019 to 2020.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished documents is governed by the Copyright Law of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or North Korea. Consult the Asian Division for more information.

Access and Restrictions

The Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Asian Division prior to visiting. Advance notice is needed because collections must be retrieved for researchers.

Readers using this collection must sign and date a register for use of this specific collection.

READING ROOM RULES AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

- Notes may be taken only on the paper or note cards provided in the reading room. Pens may not be used, and pencils are provided.
- ALL CONTAINERS MUST STAY ON TRUCKS. Only one folder at a time may be withdrawn from a box. Cardboard dummies are provided to mark the place where folders should be refilled. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIALS IN EACH FOLDER. Report any serious disarrangement to the reference staff.
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- **HELP SAVE OUR COLLECTIONS.** Do not make marks on manuscripts, do not write notes on top of manuscripts, do not rest books or other objects on top of manuscripts. Handle loose sheets or bound pages by their edges; avoid touching the surface as much as possible. Exercise the greatest possible care in handling fragile manuscripts.
- Researchers must follow all directions of the reference staff regarding the handling of manuscript material.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: The Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa Collection, Container number, Folder title, Korean Collection, Asian Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Organizational History

Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa was the first international trading company established by the North Korean government, and it was based in Pyongyang, North Korea. Heretofore, there was little known about Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa. All the information contained in this section of this finding aid was compiled while processing the collection. The exact year of the company's establishment is not confirmed. However, established materials state that the company had been in operation since 1947, when the North Korean People's Committee, a provisional government in North Korea, was established.

While the company was privately owned, it was a semi-state organization operating under the supervision and control of the North Korean Ministry of Commerce. In its capacity as a private company, it was more suited to trade with countries and regions where there were no formal economic agreements. Additionally, experts in the field of trade were needed to deal with complex and professional trade affairs in overseas markets and to make a profit.

Although the company was in an area that was heavily influenced by the Soviet Union, the company did not trade with the Soviet Union. Instead, it traded with Hong Kong, China, Japan, and South Korea. Inter-Korean trade was not stable. At that time, the United States military and the South Korean government repeatedly approved and rejected trade requests between the two Koreas. Inter-Korean trade stopped after the end of the Korean War.

Although not much is known about this company, in 1949, the leadership, departments, overseas branches, and major trade destinations were as follows:

- President: Won Hyun Lee
- Vice President: Kim Jung-soo
- Departments: Planning Department, Trade Department, Accounting Department, General Affairs Department, Executive Department, and Inspection Department
- Branches: Sinŭiju Branch, Namp'o Branch, Wŏnsan Branch, Hamhŭng Branch, Ch'ŏngjin Branch, Sŏngjin Branch, and Namyang Branch
- Major trading destinations: Hong Kong, Tianjin, Dalian, and Dandong

Some branches were located in cities close to the Chinese border. Other branches on the east coast such as Wŏnsan, Hamhŭng, Ch'ŏngjin, and Sŏngjin benefited from the industrial production concentrated in those areas. Additionally, there was an abundance of seafood harvest which could be exported.

The company's main exports included chemicals, seafood, medicine, grains, and soybeans. Imports consisted of daily necessities and construction materials. Ships and railroads were used for trade.

Hong Kong was the most important trade destination, and its trading centers were located in the cities of Dalian, Tianjin, Dandong, Shimyang, and Qingdao. Overseas representatives were dispatched to each branch. Through these bases, there was a partial trade with Japan.

Although it cannot be definitively determined when the company closed, the company was at risk in many ways in 1950. Communist governments in China controlled foreign trade, and it became difficult to trade with Hong Kong. The company's operations, which depended mainly on Hong Kong, were in trouble. Additionally, the Korean War broke out in June 1950, and the company began to supply war supplies.

Scope and Content Note

The Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa spans the years from 1947 to 1950. It was the first international trading company established by the North Korean government and was based in Pyongyang from 1947 to 1950 with branches in Dalian, Dandong, Qingdao, Sinŭiju, Namp'o, Wŏnsan, Hamhŭng, Ch'ŏngjin, Sŏngjin, and Namyang. The collection consists of correspondence, business reports, trade invoices, statistics, personnel records, meeting and planning notes, memoranda, and other miscellaneous records pertaining to export and import activities of Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa. Also featured are papers documenting the experiences of overseas Chinese in North Korea. These records are in Korean and include some Chinese, Japanese, and English. This collection is one of the most significant and rare collections of the Korean collection in the Asian Division.

The collection contains 21 boxes and is generally arranged alphabetically by topic. The material housed inside each box was initially bound together and pertained to a general topic. After being treated by the Conservation Division, each previously bound item is now placed in folders and housed in a box. The original order of the documents has been retained to provide researchers with context. The exception is that boxes one and two contain topical material relating solely to the Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe, the North Korea Overseas Chinese Federation. This material was originally dispersed throughout the collection and has been organized into boxes one and two.

After the Korean Peninsula was liberated from Japan in 1945, the number of Chinese who lived in North Korea was estimated to be around 60,000. The Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe was established in December 1946 in Pyongyang, North Korea. The goals of Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe were to promote friendly relations between Chinese and North Koreans; to protect the interests of Chinese residents; and to voice the concerns of the Chinese government to the North Korean government. Chinese residents were able to engage in social, economic, and simple political activities due in large part to the efforts of the Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe and its relationship to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. To date, documentation of the lives of overseas Chinese in North Korea are rare to find. The material in boxes one and two shed light into how the Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe advocated for the rights of overseas Chinese in North Korea.

Material from box one primarily relates to activities from 1947 and include records from the trading company's branches in Pyongyang and Sinŭiju. Included in this box is a copy of a letter sent by the Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe, on behalf of all North Korean Chinese, to Kim Il-sŏng, chairman of the North Korean People's Committee, and the Commander of the Soviet Army. The letter was written in commemoration of the second anniversary of the National Liberation Day of Korea on August 15, 1947 and expressed that overseas Chinese residents appreciated how their lives improved in many ways.

Previously, only Korean citizens could own land, but land was distributed to Chinese residents living in North Korea. Records in box one reveal how overseas Chinese were able to own land because of land reforms. In addition, education had been under the control of the North Korean government since 1949. Yet, overseas Chinese students were treated the same as North Korean students. Documents from the box show that the North Korean government provided educational facilities and materials needed to repair old classrooms to some Chinese schools in North Korea. Material from this box also disclose that overseas Chinese purchased necessary goods from Dalian, China and other countries and claimed tax exemptions.

Box two primarily pertains to activities in 1948 and contains official documents relating to diseases, publicity of Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe, dealings with foreign countries, and the general affairs of the Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe. There is also a 1949 book list of publications by Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe. On August 9, 1946, the North Korean Provisional People's Committee published the "Decision on Public Citizenship." As a result of this decree, citizenship would be issued regardless of the social composition, economic stature, and if you are 18 years of age or older. Included in box two are applications by overseas Chinese for identification.

After liberation in 1945, the North Korea Overseas Chinese Federation played a crucial role in connecting the North Korean government and Chinese government. The inclusion of these documents in the collection perhaps point to how the trading company used the connections already established between Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to open trade routes into northern China.

The rest of the collection, boxes three through twenty-one, provide insight into the inner workings, organizational history, and administration of a semi-state run, private company during a turbulent time in Korean history. The collection contains a lot of documents that show communication between Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa and the North Korean government. Correspondence, reports, invoices, meeting and planning notes, personnel records, resumes, invoices, guidelines for trade practices, statistical tables, and other organizational records chronicle the activities of the Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa.

Topics include commerce, planning, trading relationships, updates from various branches, economic conditions, other trading companies. More importantly though these documents bring to light the economic conditions and policies, history of commerce, foreign economic relationships, and politics of the North Korean government.

Records reveal that in 1948 the company's main exports were chemicals, seafood, medicine, and soybeans. In 1949, the export rankings changed to seafood, soybeans, grains, and chemicals. In 1948, the main imports were daily necessities and construction materials, while in 1949, the most important import was construction materials followed by daily necessities. Documents identified as "top secret papers" include proposals for importing sulfur, but at the time, there was an economic blockade on this item to communist countries. Also included are import and export transactional documents with other trading companies, specifically the Metropolitan Commercial Company. Ships and railroads were used as methods of transportation, and ship times sheets show that ships belonging to the Cho-Sso Shipping Company were frequently used for transporting goods.

There are many documents in the collection that point to a major economic disruption in the trading company in 1950. According to data from the collection, on June 7, 1950, the new community government in China controlled foreign currency. This impacted the relationship between the Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa and Hong Kong, the company's most important trade destination, and trade fell sharply. This economic disruption impacted various aspects of the Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa, and there are no records beyond 1950.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is generally arranged alphabetically by topic.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

Organizations

Chosŏn Sangsa Chusik Hoesa.
Pukchosŏn Hwagyo Yonhaphoe.

Subjects

Basic needs--Korea (North)
Building materials--Korea (North)
Chemical industry--Korea (North)
Chinese--Commerce--Korea (North)
Chinese--Korea (North)
Chinese--Korea (North)--Societies, etc.
Chinese--Social networks--Korea (North)
Exports--Korea (North)
Grain trade--Korea (North)
Immigrants--Political activity--Korea (North)
Immigrants--Social networks--Korea (North)
Imports--Korea (North)
International trade.
Pharmaceutical industry--Korea (North)
Railroads--Korea (North)
Seafood industry--Korea (North)
Shipment of goods--Korea (North)
Shipping--Korea (North)
Soybean industry--Korea (North)
Trading companies--Korea (North)

Places

China--Foreign economic relations--Korea (North)
Korea (North)--Commerce.
Korea (North)--Economic conditions.
Korea (North)--Economic policy.
Korea (North)--Ethnic relations.
Korea (North)--Foreign economic relations--China.
Korea (North)--Foreign economic relations.
Korea (North)--History--20th century.
Korea (North)--Politics and government--20th century.
P'yŏngyang (Korea)--Commerce.
P'yŏngyang (Korea)--History--20th century.

Titles

Archive of a North Korean corporation

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1	<u>북조선 화교 연합 총회, 1947</u>
BOX 2	<u>북조선 화교 연합 총회, 공문 서류철, 1948-1949</u>
BOX 3	<u>중국 대련 교역 관계, 1947-1948</u>
BOX 4	<u>중국 대련 교역 관계, 무역부, 1948</u>
BOX 5	<u>무역부, 1949</u>
BOX 6	<u>경제 조사 서류철, 기획부 경제과, 1949</u>
BOX 7	<u>수입품 처분 신청 서류철, 계획부, 1949</u>
BOX 8	<u>사업 총결 보고서, 검사부, 1949</u>
BOX 9	<u>경제 조사 자료, 기획부 경제과, 1949</u>
BOX 10	<u>무역 실무 관련 서류, 1949</u>
BOX 11	<u>무역 통계서철, 경제과, 1949</u>
BOX 12	<u>메트로폴리탄 커머셜 회사 취급 상품 사고 종합 통계표, 1949</u>
BOX 13	<u>사업 총결 보고, 1949</u>
BOX 14	<u>사업 총결 보고서, 계획부, 1949</u>
BOX 15	<u>신의주 지점 검열 보고서, 경리부, 1949</u>
BOX 16	<u>사업 총결 보고서, 검사부, 1950</u>
BOX 17	<u>한국 전쟁 직전의 수출입 사업, 계획부, 1950</u>
BOX 18	<u>메트로폴리탄 커머셜 회사, 광석 수출 관계, 1950</u>
BOX 19	<u>수출품 조사서철, 경제과, 1950</u>
BOX 20	<u>수출입 물자 취급 명세표, 1948-1949</u>

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	<p>북조선 화교 연합 총회, 1947 (13 folders)</p> <p>북조선 화교 연합 총회 문서 (2 folders) 신의주 지점 자료 (2 folders) 월간 서류 6월 7월 8월 9월 10월 11월 12월 해방 2주년 기념일 (8.15), 김일성 장군에게 화교 학교 건설</p>
BOX 2	<p>북조선 화교 연합 총회, 공문 서류철, 1948-1949 (11 folders)</p> <p>공문 서류철, 1948 (2 folders) 방역 사업, 1948 선전 관계, 1948 (2 folders) 외래 공문, 1948 총무 관계 도서 목록, 1949 화교 신분 증명 신청 서류철, 1949 왕문록, 개인 자서전 표지</p>
BOX 3	<p>중국 대련 교역 관계, 1947-1948 (8 folders)</p> <p>함경도 수산물, 1947 사업 계획서 1948 1-2월 3월 4월 5월 (2 folders)</p>

중국 대련 교역 관계, 1947-1948

Container

Contents

6월

7월

BOX 4

중국 대련 교역 관계, 무역부, 1948

(10 folders)

대련 교역

7월

8월

(3 folders)

9월

10월

11월

12월

수출입 명세표

표지

BOX 5

무역부, 1949

(16 folders)

공무 여행 증명서

물자 결손과 처분

(2 folders)

물자 인수

(5 folders)

물자 할당 보고서

수입품

신임장

(2 folders)

자료 구입, 분양

차입서

출고 의뢰서

표지

BOX 6

경제 조사 서류철, 기획부 경제과, 1949

(20 folders)

목차

공작원 회의록

대소환 (배) 출항 조회

대외 무역

대외 무역 관리법

무역 참고자료

(3 folders)

북평시

전보

중국 수출입 허가제

속보, 동북 행정 위원회 공채 발행

Container	Contents
	수출입품 중국 무역 대련 (2 folders) 동북 천진 화북 (3 folders) 표지
BOX 7	수입품 처분 신청 서류철, 계획부, 1949 (13 folders) 목차 수입 물자 처분, 할당, 배정 3월 5월 6월 7월 8월 9월 10월 (2 folders) 11월 (2 folders) 12월 표지
BOX 8	사업 총결 보고서, 검사부, 1949 (7 folders) 사업 총결 보고서 인사 이동 (5 folders) 표지
BOX 9	경제 조사 자료, 기획부 경제과, 1949 (18 folders) 목차 각종 물품 조사 동북 동북 화학 공업 관리국 상품 목록 수출입 허가 절차, 수출입 세율 무역 양식 (2 folders) 무역부 사무 편람 무역부 외국 Vessel Time Sheets

Container	Contents
	수출 수입 운송 화물 일본 홍콩, 동북 지역 수출입 (5 folders) 홍콩 향항 표지
BOX 10	무역 실무 관련 서류, 1949 (5 folders) 각부에 대한 지침서 사무 처리 절차 수입품 홍콩 주재 공문 서류 회람
BOX 11	무역 통계서첩, 경제과, 1949 (6 folders) 대련시 물가 대상국별 무역, 물가 통계표 홍콩 천진 청도시, 화북 조선 수산물 무역 통계표, 1926-1939 표지
BOX 12	메트로폴리탄 커머셜 회사 취급 상품 사고 종합 통계표, 1949 (8 folders) 경화유한공사 (2 folders) 극비 서류철 - 경제 봉쇄물품 (sulfur) 수입 (2 folders) 총결산 보고 (3 folders) 표지
BOX 13	사업 총결 보고, 1949 (8 folders) 사업보고 검사부 계획부 (3 folders) 무역부 서무과

문제점들
홍콩, 천진 수출품

BOX 14

사업 총결 보고서, 계획부, 1949

(9 folders)

각 지점별 지시서
각항에 들어온 수입품들
개인 교역
지역별
수입품
수출물자 통계표 (개인 상인, 회사, 정부 기관)
보고서
선별과 종별에 따른 홍콩 수입품
종합표
표지

BOX 15

신의주 지점 검열 보고서, 경리부, 1949

(7 folders)

업무 실태 보고서
(6 folders)
표지

BOX 16

사업 총결 보고서, 검사부, 1950

(10 folders)

1.4 분기 사업 총결 보고서
(2 folders)
1950년 초반 수입
(2 folders)
물자 수입 의뢰 관계, 계획부
수출 물자
원산 지점 문제점 보고서
조선 인민군 부대장 앞
천진시
표지

BOX 17

한국 전쟁 직전의 수출입 사업, 계획부, 1950

(13 folders)

기획부, 보험
무역 관계
1월
2월, 신의주 지점
3월, 중국 주재 대사관
4월
5월

6월
7월, 38이남 해방 지구와의 교역
사업 일지, 6-7월
수출입 관세 납부
수입품 처분 신청 소요 일수 통계표
철도 운임표
표지

BOX 18

메트로폴리탄 커머셜 회사, 광석 수출 관계, 1950

(10 folders)

광석 수출 (Metropolitan Commercial Co., Ltd.)
경화유한공사 (Hong Kong)
(2 folders)
China Trade Industrial Service, Inc. (New York)
IIDA & CO., Ltd. (Tokyo)
린광석
자철석
(2 folders)
철광
(2 folders)
표지

BOX 19

수출품 조사서철, 경제과, 1950

(6 folders)

새 중국 정부 외화 통제와 무역
수출물자 외화 시가 조사 보고
(3 folders)
홍콩 경화 유한 공사와의 수출품 조사
표지

BOX 20

수출입 물자 취급 명세표, 1948-1949

(2 folders)

수출입 현황 보고서, 대련시, 1948
중국 신문의 경제 기사 스크랩, 1949