

# THE MYŎNJUJŎN: A SILK MERCHANTS' GUILD IN LATE CHOSŎN KOREA

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## Introduction

This paper is part of a broader research project attempting to understand the role of commerce in Chosŏn-dynasty Korea, a project that will hopefully contribute something to our general understanding of the position of commerce in pre-capitalist societies. Commerce has clearly played an important role in human societies since long before the rise of capitalism. The anthropologist Eric Wolf pointed out the rarity in human history of societies “where all surpluses are siphoned upwards and redistributed downward through the echelons of a hierarchically organized elite without the participation of commercial intermediaries or merchants.”<sup>1</sup> Likewise, although the political economy of Chosŏn Korea was fundamentally based upon the extraction of tribute and a highly developed system of state-controlled redistribution, merchants had an increasingly important role as intermediaries in those processes.<sup>2</sup> So, in a society like that of Chosŏn Korea, the relationship between state and merchants is absolutely central to understanding commerce.

Within this context, this paper will be limited to examining one particular commercial institution—the *sijŏn* 市廛 or licensed guilds of late Chosŏn Seoul—and will make a specific case study of the Myŏnjuhŏn or Domestic Silk Merchants' Guild. Korean research on the *sijŏn* merchants is fairly scarce and information in English-language texts is almost non-existent, so I will give a brief outline of what sort of institution the *sijŏn* were.

### *The sijŏn system*

In one form or another, this system of city commerce lasted for around a thousand years from the beginning of the Koryŏ dynasty (918) right up until the end of the

Chosŏn period (1910), providing the government and the citizens of the capital with the goods they required. As the early 19th-century government manual *Man'gi yoram* notes:

The King's city is organised such that Chongmyo [the royal ancestral shrine] lies to the left and Sajikdan [altar to the guardian deities of the state] to the right, while the court is at the front with the markets behind. Since the sijŏn are concerned with the commerce of the common people and at the same time provide goods needed by the state, the rulers of the country consider them to be important.<sup>3</sup>

Although government policy and Confucian ideology tended towards the suppression of commercial activities in favour of agricultural production or at least the strict control of merchants and markets, the above quotation shows that in practice the Chosŏn ruling class also recognised the importance of commerce. It therefore consistently tried to maintain the sijŏn system as a way of channelling commerce so that it could simultaneously control it and benefit from it. This was especially true after the introduction of the *taedongbŏp* 大同法 system in the early 17th century, whereby taxes and tribute were exacted from the population in easily convertible form (cloth, cash or rice) and then used to pay *kongin* 貢人 (tribute merchants) and *sijŏnin* for other goods required by the government.

In practice the sijŏn of late Chosŏn, as described in the *Man'gi yoram*, consisted of around 74 separate guilds specialising in everything from umbrellas to toffee and sandals to pheasants. Each of these was made up of a number of individual merchants or groups of merchants with their own businesses, sometimes operating from joint premises (*chŏnbang* 塵房) mostly located on or around Chongno in central Seoul, sometimes from their own homes and sometimes as street hawkers. From at least the 17th century, the government had divided the sijŏn into those that had to provide a fixed level of tribute (*yup'un kakchŏn* 有分各塵) and those that did not (*mup'un kakchŏn* 無分各塵). At the apex of the system the Chosŏn government designated those sijŏn which it considered most important and from which it required the most tribute as the 'Six Guilds' (*yugŭijŏn* 六矣塵 or *yukchubijŏn* 六主比塵). This was actually a constantly changing group of sijŏn, but in the second half of the 19th century it seems to have consisted of the Ipjŏn 立塵 (Chinese Silk Guild, also called Sonjŏn 線塵), Paengmokjŏn 白木塵 (Cotton Cloth Guild, also called Myŏnp'ojŏn 綿布塵), Myŏnjuhjŏn 綿紬塵 (Domestic Silk Guild), Naewae'ŏmuljŏn 內外魚物塵 (Inner and Outer Dried Fish Guilds), Chijŏn 紙塵 (Paper Guild) and the Chŏp'ojŏn/P'ojŏn 苧布塵/布塵 (Ramie Cloth Guild / Hemp Cloth Guild).<sup>4</sup>

The guild organisations of sijŏn merchants were known as *tojung* 都中 and probably varied greatly in their complexity according to the size and importance of the sijŏn. Generally speaking, it is known that each had a headman called a *taehaengsu* 大行首, who often seems to have been elected by the membership. They also had a

guildhall called a *toga* 都家, where meetings were held and merchandise and other sundries such as stationery were stored. This *tojung*, in common with the pattern of pre-capitalist guild organisations in many countries, was responsible for protecting the commercial privileges of the guild merchants, minimising internal competition and, perhaps most importantly in the Chosŏn context, regulating relations with government.

From the government side, the administration of the *sijŏn* system fell under the jurisdiction of a number of government departments, but the offices most closely concerned with its operation were the Hansŏngbu 漢城府 (Capital Administrative Bureau) and its sub-office, the P'yŏngsisŏ (Office for Market Regulation). Besides the prevention of fraud, these offices were particularly responsible for the administration of the monopoly rights of the *sijŏn*, known as *kŭmnanjŏn'gwon* 禁亂塵權, which forbade non-*sijŏn* merchants from selling *sijŏn* commodities within the area of the capital. Although this monopoly right was supposedly removed from all but the Six Guilds with the *Sinhae tonggong* (commercial equalisation) declaration of 1791, documents dating from the late 19th century provide evidence to the contrary.<sup>5</sup> It seems that even after the apparent 'liberalisation' of commerce in the late 18th century, many *sijŏn* could still rely on the government to defend them against competition from private merchants or to arbitrate in disputes between different *sijŏn*.<sup>6</sup>

### *Evaluation of sources*

In the past, scholars studying the *sijŏn* have largely relied on government annals and other government sources such as the administrative manual *Man'gi yoram*. Recently, however, Ko Tonghwan has done much to elucidate the inner structure of the *sijŏn* guilds, the *tojung*, using a number of original sources created by the guilds themselves.<sup>7</sup> My research on the Myŏnjuhŏn will also concentrate on these sorts of sources and will attempt to look at both the inner structure of the guild and its relationship to the government. Fortunately, a large number of account books belonging to the Myŏnjuhŏn have survived in the Kawai Collection<sup>8</sup> held at Kyōtō University. These books appear to have come from the Myŏnjuhŏn's guildhall and the earliest (bar one or two) date from late 1864. This dating is apparently due to the fact that the hall had burnt down earlier that year and most of the guild's account books had gone with it.<sup>9</sup> The surviving documents include quite a variety of account books relating to the guild's dealings with the government as well as accounts of daily expenses and various books recording payments by guild members and rotas for official positions and duties within the organisation. There are also copies of government documents relating to the Myŏnjuhŏn, which presumably were kept by the guild for reference purposes.

Although these documents contain a large amount of data on the activities of a

group of late Chosŏn merchants and are thus very valuable sources, it is also worth noting their limitations. What stands out particularly from even an initial look at them is the lack of information on the activities of individual merchants within the Myŏnjujŏn. These documents deal exclusively with the activities of the guild and its various sub-units and therefore are largely concerned with the guild's relationship with the government and its numerous offices and officials. In addition, there appears to be little or no information about the guild's activities in relation to distribution, in other words how the silk that it provided to the government got from producer to guildhall.<sup>10</sup> This paper will therefore concentrate on what I have learnt so far from these documents about the internal structure of the Myŏnjujŏn and its relationship to the government. Unfortunately, it is not possible at this stage to say anything about the distribution structure utilised by the Myŏnjujŏn merchants or to make any comparison between the guild's trade with the Chosŏn government and the overall amount of trade being carried out by its individual merchants.

### **What sort of organisation was the Myŏnjujŏn?**

By the late 19th century, the Myŏnjujŏn already had a history of at least 400 years behind it, with the earliest reference to the guild dating from 1485.<sup>11</sup> It appears periodically in government records from then onwards, often in relation to commercial disputes, as in 1788 when there was a dispute between the Myŏnjujŏn and the Chokturijŏn (Jewellery Guild) over the right to sell black silk, or 1847 when it came into conflict with the Mojajŏn (Hatters' Guild) over Western cotton.<sup>12</sup> When the guild is mentioned in government texts such as *T'akchiji* or *Man'gi yoram*, it always appears in the list of the Six Guilds and is consistently near the top, either in third or sometimes second position. While these texts give no concrete information about the scale of the guild's activities, they do indicate its position as one of the most important and powerful economic organisations in pre-modern Korea and an organisation with considerable value for the Chosŏn government.

Government records also indicate that sections of the guild's shops or guildhall were burnt down on a number of occasions. In fact the Myŏnjujŏn seems to have been particularly unlucky on this account, suffering catastrophic fires in 1761, 1844 and 1864, and on each occasion receiving assistance from the government to rebuild. The entry in the *Ilsongnok* annal relating to the last fire is useful in that it gives us some idea of the size of the Myŏnjujŏn's buildings. It relates that the guild lost 50 *k'an*<sup>13</sup> of guildhall (presumably the whole building) and 40 *k'an* of shops.<sup>14</sup>

Plans drawn in the early 20th century also tell us something about the location and layout of the guild. According to a map which is reproduced by Pyŏn Kwangsŏk,<sup>15</sup> the buildings of the Myŏnjujŏn stood on the south side of Chongno, to the west of the Posin'gak bell tower. Facing on to the main street were three main sections of shops

called *pang* 房, each subdivided into a further ten smaller units. Two more *pang* were situated behind these on the small alley that ran parallel to Chongno, and hence called *hubang* ('back shops'). Unfortunately, the map does not show the location of the guildhall, although the fact that it burnt down with a number of shops in 1864 would indicate that it was close to the various Myŏnjuŏn *pang*.

In terms of its merchandise, we can get a good idea of the types of silk that the guild dealt in from its own documents, which outline all its trade with the government.<sup>16</sup> The generic term for the domestically produced silk in which the Myŏnjuŏn had a monopoly was *myŏngju* 明紬 or *myŏnju* 綿紬, but the specific varieties of silk that the guild sold to the government were *suju* 水紬, *t'aju* 吐紬 and *sangju* 上紬. *Suju* was a type of high-quality silk gauze, known in Korean as *kip* 帛. Besides plain *suju* the guild also dealt in red (*taehong* 大紅), green (*ch'orok* 草綠) and indigo (*nam* 藍) *suju*. *T'aju* was the name for a heavy, rather expensive type of Korean silk which could also be plain (*paekt'aju* 白吐紬) or dyed indigo, red, green, yellow (*hwangt'aju* 黃吐紬), black (*hŭkt'aju* 黑吐紬), purple (*chajŏkt'aju* 紫的吐紬) or blue (*ach'ŏngt'aju* 鴉青吐紬).<sup>17</sup> The term *sangju* apparently refers to a high quality type of *myŏngju*, which the guild provided to the Myŏngnyegung (today's Toksugung palace). The Myŏnjuŏn documents seem to indicate that the guild also dealt with raw silk (*paeksa* 白絲), although it is not clear how.

As with the other members of the Six Guilds, the Myŏnjuŏn merchants appear to have had a social status similar to that of the Chosŏn *chungin* 中人 or middling class of technical staff and petty officials.<sup>18</sup> They dealt on a regular basis with the lower echelons of the government bureaucracy, appear to have eaten and dressed well and were organised into lineages where legitimate sons could inherit the business and guild position of their fathers. Organisations such as the *sijŏn* guilds usually had a set of regulations—called *ibŭi* 立議—governing the conduct of members and in particular entrance into the guild. Unfortunately the Myŏnjuŏn's *ibŭi* has not survived,<sup>19</sup> but the Myŏnjuŏn documents show indirectly that entrance regulations were similar to those found in the Ipjŏn's, that is, the Chinese Silk Guild's *ibŭi*.<sup>20</sup> It is clear that the guild discriminated between new members who had relatives already in the organisation and those that did not. In the latter case the new entrant, known as a *p'ansillaein* 判新來人, had to pay a membership fee at least twice as large as that levied on those who had a father or uncle who was already a guild member, and as with the Ipjŏn, they probably had to be recommended by an existing member too.<sup>21</sup> This demonstrates that the Myŏnjuŏn, like other *sijŏn*, was a largely lineage-based organisation where the inheritance of a place within the guild was written into its regulations. This is further supported by even a brief look at the names which occur in the guild's documents. One can find many examples of contemporaneous members with the same surname and generation name, indicating that they are brothers or paternal cousins; interestingly, it is also possible to find examples of members who

may be maternal cousins, as indicated by their sharing of a generation name but not a surname.<sup>22</sup>

A more detailed analysis of the documents might reveal the exact number of members of the guild at a particular point in time; however, at the moment it is only possible to give a rough idea. In the 1870s and 1880s, the guild's membership was certainly at least 120, as this is the number of subscribers to one of its mutual funds.<sup>23</sup> But it is also quite possible that the actual membership was considerably more than that. On the basis of a different source, Ko Tonghwan estimates that each of the Six Guilds consisted of between 600 and 1200 individual members.<sup>24</sup>

### *How the Myŏnjuhŏn functioned for its members*

While it appears that the Chosŏn government played a major role in the early formation of the sijŏn and saw them as existing largely for its own benefit, it is also clear that for us to call an organisation a guild, it must have existed at least in part for the benefit of its members. This was certainly the case for the Myŏnjuhŏn, which, like the other constituents in the yugŭijŏn, or Six Guilds, sought to represent its members to the government and perhaps most importantly to protect their monopoly over their specialist commodity: myŏngju. We know from government records that the guild regularly took its grievances to the authorities and became embroiled in disputes with other merchants on a number of occasions in the 19th century.<sup>25</sup> The Myŏnjuhŏn documents reveal that the guild appointed an official to deal with cases of *nanjŏn*—that is non-sijŏn merchants dealing in sijŏn products—who was called the *nanjŏn ch'aji* 亂塵次知. Although it is unclear exactly how the Myŏnjuhŏn caught or reported illegal traders, there is evidence that the *nanjŏn ch'aji* had close relations with two particular government offices, the Hansŏngbu and the Hyŏngjo 刑曹 (Board of Punishment).<sup>26</sup> It is known that both of these offices were involved in the process of catching and punishing *nanjŏn* merchants.<sup>27</sup> So unless the post of *nanjŏn ch'aji* was some sort of sinecure, charged only with delivering bribes to government offices, it would seem that the guild continued to be involved in the active protection of its monopoly in the late 19th century.

As with guild-type organisations in other parts of the world, the Myŏnjuhŏn had an important financial role to play in the lives of the merchants who made up its membership. It operated on the basis of a number of separate mutual funds or syndicates called *kye* 契 and *so* 所, each of which would provide funds to cover the funerals of merchants or their close relatives. In the guild's expenses books (*sangyongch'aek* 上用冊) we can find many examples of such payments for the funerals of parents, wives, uncles and the merchants themselves.<sup>28</sup> These mutual funds also provided loans to the merchants either with no interest or with rates varying between 1 and 5 per cent per month.<sup>29</sup> While this was one way for the guild to raise funds so as

to fulfil its obligations to the government, it could also be understood as a form of mutual insurance for the merchants, allowing them to get through hard times and avoid bankruptcy in a society where other forms of financial institution were non-existent.

Besides its role in mediating between merchants and government, protecting their monopoly and providing for the general welfare of the merchants, the Myŏnjuhŏn had important ritual and social functions that seem to have been designed to strengthen the internal hierarchy of the guild while promoting harmonious relations between members. The sijŏn merchants in general carried out annual and perhaps more frequent rituals at the shrines dedicated to the Chinese god of war Kwanu 關羽. This deified fictional/historical figure from the famous novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* was (and still is) a god of wealth worshipped by Chinese businessmen.<sup>30</sup> By the end of the Chosŏn dynasty there were five Kwanu shrines in Seoul—north, east, south, west, and one small central shrine next to the Posin'gak, which must have been frequented by the sijŏn merchants. The Myŏnjuhŏn merchants made a sacrifice, presumably for the well-being of the guild, in the tenth month of every year at the Nammyo 南廟 (South Kwanu shrine). This cost them 40 *nyang*, plus a further three *nyang* for an officiating priest, with these costs rising massively to more than 180 *nyang* by the late 1880s.<sup>31</sup> The guild also carried out a sacrificial ritual to the tutelary deity of the guildhall, which appears to have taken place annually in the fourth or fifth month. The guild account books record that this ritual cost 20 *nyang*.<sup>32</sup> Besides these annual rituals, there also appear to have been monthly *kosa* 告祀 rituals in the guildhall.

The social order within the guild was reinforced by a great variety of gifts and allowances given to members for carrying out certain duties or to express condolences or congratulations on particular occasions. The accounts of the guild's junior administrative body, the Pibang, regularly include *munan* 問安—gifts of tobacco given to officials as a courtesy on certain occasions. Examples of such occasions include the death of a niece;<sup>33</sup> the wedding of a granddaughter;<sup>34</sup> or a visit to the family grave.<sup>35</sup> The same accounts also show that tobacco was required at the regular meetings of the guild, which must have been important social as well as administrative occasions.<sup>36</sup> In the accounts of the Myŏnjuhŏn's senior administrative body, the Taebang, there are similar expenses for condolences or congratulations, apparently involving wine or feasting, called *wibae* 慰盃 and *chujŏp* 酒接.<sup>37</sup>

Alongside the various irregular gifts outlined above, the officials of the guild also received regular monthly or annual allowances of tobacco and other goods, creating a complex system of redistribution within the guild. Such allowances include *ch'iwi* 致慰 which seems to have consisted of food granted to newly appointed officials in either the Taebang or the Pibang. In the case of the latter body, the account book *Susŏk ch'iwi ch'aek* records that the officials of the Pibang were given various kinds

of seafood including octopus and sea cucumber as well as tobacco and chickens. The Myŏnjuhŏn's 'manual of operations', called *Tŭngnok*, also stipulates numerous other allowances that the high officials of the guild were to receive on a regular basis, sometimes in cash, sometimes in food or tobacco and sometimes in the form of other goods such as hats, needles and incense.<sup>38</sup> The regulations laid out in the *Tŭngnok* for this system of distribution clearly reinforce the strict hierarchy of the guild, with a scale of remuneration starting at the top with the taehaengsu, or headman, and descending through the various grades of officials. It is worth noting that age and length of service to the guild were also important in the organisation's internal order, as those members with the highest age seniority, known as *samchwa* 三座, were high up in the pecking order for allowances even if they did not hold an official position.<sup>39</sup>

The other side of the coin to these allowances and gifts were fines levied on guild members for breaking rules. A part of the Pibang's income came from fines collected from members for transgressions such as using disrespectful language to elders,<sup>40</sup> or disobeying orders.<sup>41</sup> A more serious offence seems to have been making mistakes in an account book or other record. If a member acting as a clerk omitted something from an account book (*nangnu* 落漏) or recorded something twice (*ch'ŏmnok* 疊錄), this could bring a fine of three nyang.<sup>42</sup> Fines levied on the senior members of the Myŏnjuhŏn can be found in the account book of the Taebang, although they are less frequent and costly than those levied by the Pibang on the junior members. Obviously these fines must have been important for maintaining the order of the organisation, but they also seem to have been a useful source of income, at least in the case of the Pibang, where they could often amount to more than the expenditure for a specific accounting period.

### *Responsibilities of the Myŏnjuhŏn to the government*

As has already been noted, the sijŏn served a two-fold purpose for the Chosŏn government. They were both a way of securing goods needed by government offices and royal palaces and a way of controlling commercial activities in the capital.

The Myŏnjuhŏn documents indicate that, in line with the general Chosŏn taxation system, the merchants of the guild had to provide tribute to the government in three forms: tribute in kind, labour services, and cash taxes or tributes in various forms. In general these duties were called *kugyŏk* or *siyŏk*.<sup>43</sup>

#### A) CHINBAE 進排

For the sijŏn merchants, like the kongin, or tribute merchants, the bulk of the goods provided to the government were not actually given as tribute but took the form of trade carried out between guild and government, where the guild received a fixed



price for goods, called *suga* 受價. In general, this provisioning of goods to the Chosŏn government was known as *chinbae*. In the case of the Myŏnjuhŏn this meant regularly providing large quantities of silks such as t'oju and suju to various government offices and palaces. In addition to this general *chinbae*, the guild had to provide silk for the Chosŏn government to give as tribute to the Chinese emperor. This came in two forms: *sep'ye* 歲幣, which was sent in the tenth month of every year, and *pangmul* 方物, which could be sent at various times of the year with missions to China. As well as *sep'ye* and *pangmul*, the Myŏnjuhŏn supplied the silk that envoys to China had to give as gifts to the government offices they stopped at en route to Beijing—this was called *ch'ŏngin yedan* 清人禮單. The guild was also expected to provide silk for diplomatic missions to Japan, to be given as presents to the 'King of Japan' (日本王). This was known as *waein yedan* 倭人禮單 and was provided regularly up until 1876, when the formal relationship between Chosŏn and Meiji Japan changed with the Kanhwa Treaty.

Table 1 gives an outline of all the Myŏnjuhŏn's annual *chinbae* duties and the *suga* it was supposed to receive in return. It shows that the guild's responsibilities to the

**Table 1: Outline of Myŏnjuhŏn *chinbae* burden**

Type of <i>chinbae</i>	Quantity of silk in bolts <sup>44</sup> ( <i>p'il</i> 疋) per year	<i>Suga</i> in bolts of cotton ( <i>hajimok</i> ) per bolt of silk	Notes
Sep'ye 歲幣	400 <i>p'il</i>	9 <i>p'il</i> ( <i>taedongmok</i> )	
Pangmul 方物 ( <i>chinhŏn yemul</i> )	900 <i>p'il</i>	8 <i>p'il</i>	
Suju 水紬	?	7 <i>p'il</i>	Quantity of <i>chinbae</i> seems to have varied according to government demand
Myŏngnyegung sangju 明禮宮上紬	30 <i>p'il</i>	4.5 <i>p'il</i>	
T'oju 吐紬	80 <i>p'il</i> <sup>45</sup>	10 <i>p'il</i>	The T'ojugye (吐紬契) also provided a varying amount of dyed t'oju on demand, for which it received a 'dyeing price' (染色受價)
Waein yedan 倭人禮單	155 <i>p'il</i>	3 <i>p'il</i>	
Ch'ŏngin yedan 清人禮單上紬	283 <i>p'il</i> <sup>46</sup>	<i>paek myŏnju</i> 2.5 <i>p'il</i> <i>sangju</i> 4.5 <i>p'il</i>	

Sources: To compile this table I have primarily used the Myŏnjuhŏn's *Tŭngnok*, supported by entries from the guild's actual account books relating to *chinbae* (*sugach'aek* / *hoegyech'aek*). The figures for *sep'ye* and *pangmul* can also be found in the *Man'gi yoram*, 'Chaeyongp'yŏn'.

government were quite considerable, running into thousands of bolts of silk in some years.

B) YOYÖK 徭役 / KUNYÖK 軍役 (CORVÉE LABOUR)

In keeping with the rest of the more common population of Chosŏn Korea, the *sijŏn* merchants were required by the government to perform various kinds of corvée labour. Since they were residents of the capital, this usually meant carrying out repairs to royal palaces and shrines or papering walls and doors as *suri tobaegun* 修理塗楮軍. There are a number of Myŏnjujŏn account books that confirm that members of the guild were regularly required to carry out this kind of work. In particular, one account book titled *Haenggun* lists day by day the members assigned to various jobs. From this we can see that besides repairs and wallpapering, members of the Myŏnjujŏn were often assigned to set tables of sacrificial food for official rituals (*sangjokkun* 床足軍). And when pangmul, sep'ye or other tribute items were to be taken by diplomats, members could be called upon to wrap the gifts (*ponggywa'gun* 封裹軍). In the intercalary month of 1884, for example, eight guild members were required to prepare gifts for an American diplomat.<sup>47</sup> Another common job was the mending of tents used by members of the royal family (*makch'a pongjogun* 幕次縫造軍). It also seems that guild members were called on to work at the royal tombs twice a year, once in the spring and once in the autumn (*nŭnggun* 陵軍).

Compiled from the records in *Haenggun* for the year 1884, Table 2 shows clearly that members were overwhelmingly required for work as *suri tobaegun*. It also shows that the burden on the merchants was quite heavy, with a total of 983 person/days of labour provided by the Myŏnjujŏn to the government.

Another account book, *Kunbangu ch'aek*, appears to relate to cash payments made as a substitute for providing actual corvée labourers. Under a system called *koripche* 雇立制, which was common in late Chosŏn Seoul, the cost of labour was paid for in cash by the persons or institutions responsible for providing it.<sup>48</sup> In the case of the Myŏnjujŏn, the Pibang's *saengsikkye* fund paid a standard fee of 2 *chŏn* (raised to 3 *chŏn* or 1 *nyang* for certain types of work) called *panggumun* 防口文 for every person/day of labour. This appears to have applied to between a third and a half of the labour that was nominally required of the Myŏnjujŏn merchants. For the year 1884 the *Kunbangu ch'aek* records a total of 313 person/days of labour costing 109 *nyang* 8 *chŏn*. This represents around a third of the guild's total corvée labour duties for this period.

These data certainly seem to corroborate the findings of other scholars who have argued that labour services were giving way to wage labour in late Chosŏn. However, if we take at face value the evidence that a half to two-thirds of *yoyŏk* could not be avoided by making a cash payment, then the burden of actual forced labour on the guild was quite substantial. The Pibang, which controlled the junior members of

**Table 2: Pibang corvée records for 1884**

Month	Number of workers by job						
	sangjokkun 床足軍	suri tobaegun 修理塗 襦軍	ch'angho tobaegun 窓戶塗 襦軍	makch'a pongjogun 幕次縫 造軍	ponggwagun 封裹軍	nŭnggun 陵軍	other
1st	8						
2nd	15	66				19	
3rd	7	56		16			8
4th		37	2		16		
5th	19	49			8		
Inter-calary		30			22		
6th	4	30			8		
7th	5	56					
8th	11	37				19	48
9th	1	96	39	16			7
10th		34	8		20		16
11th	7	58	5				
12th	9	7		64			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>79</b>

the guild, seems to have existed largely to ensure that the Myŏnjuhŏn fulfilled its corvée labour obligations, whether in cash or in actual labour. So, despite a general trend toward the replacement of corvée with cash payments, the younger Myŏnjuhŏn merchants were still having to perform labour services in royal palaces and offices in the last decades of the 19th century.

### c) CASH TRIBUTES

The Myŏnjuhŏn was required to pay a great variety of cash tributes ranging from the regular fixed monthly tax of 6 nyang required by the P'yŏngsisŏ (Office for Market Regulation) to annual tributes collected by officials from each government office in the capital. These might be provided at certain times of the year on special occasions such as the *Yudu* festival of the sixth month or as an annual tax divided into spring

**Table 3: Outline of cash tributes paid by the Myŏnjuhŏn<sup>49</sup>**

Type of tribute	Occasion	Recipients	Amount
Sangmi 朔米	Monthly	P'yŏngsisŏ	6 nyang
<i>P'yŏngsisŏ changmu yech'a</i> 平市署掌務例次	Monthly	Officers of the P'yŏngsisŏ's senior department	2 chŏn each
<i>Hansŏngbu changmu yech'a</i> 漢城府掌務例次	Monthly	Officers of the Hansŏngbu's main department	1 chŏn each
Yudu tanja 流頭單子	Sixth/seventh month	22 government offices	1 nyang 3 chŏn
Paekchong tanja 百種單子	Sixth/seventh month	28 government offices	1 nyang 8 chŏn
<i>Kosa tanja</i> 告祀單子	Tenth month	21 government offices	4 nyang 3 chŏn
<i>Sehwa tanja</i> 歲畫單子	Twelfth month	25 government offices	1 nyang 6 chŏn
Kakch'ŏ kyebang yesong 各處契房例送	Once or twice a year, in the spring and autumn	Different offices within a variety of government bureaux such as the Sŭngjŏngwon, Sahŏnbu, Hojo, Ŭigŭmbu etc.	401 nyang (annual payments to each office varied between 5 and 20 nyang)
Naryech'ŏng yesong 饗禮廳例送	Payments made in spring and autumn	Naryech'ŏng	4 nyang
Subodan 修補單	Irregular payment, perhaps notionally as a contribution to building repairs	Various government offices	5 chŏn-1 nyang
Sinsadan 身死單 + Pu/mosangdan 父/母喪單	Irregular payments, apparently made on the death of a govt. officer or one of his parents	Officials in various offices	5 chŏn
Chinbae injŏng 進排人情	When providing chinbae	A variety of officials involved in the process of providing chinbae silk	Varied widely according to the type of silk and the agencies and officials involved
Suga injŏng 受價人情	When receiving suga	Various officials involved in the process of receiving suga payments	Variable, but often around 500 nyang in total

and autumn payments. Table 3 gives an overview of some of the regular tributes that can be found in the guild's operating manual *Tŭngnok* and account books such as *Taebang hoegye ch'aek*. This is by no means an exhaustive list of such cash tributes paid by the guild to government offices.

The variety and complexity of payments made by the Myŏnjuhŏn to officials and offices seems quite bewildering and raises the question of how these various payments should be understood. Although there was no official commercial tax as such, the monthly sangmi payment to the P'yŏngsisŏ seems to be the closest thing to such a tax, as it was collected regularly by the office most closely related to the sijŏn, presumably for its own running costs.<sup>50</sup> Many of the other payments seem to have the character of bribes collected regularly by the officials of government offices, many of which can have had little regular contact with the Myŏnjuhŏn. At the same time, these payments were a very fixed and normal part of the guild's obligations, recorded in a number of account books and carefully detailed in the *Tŭngnok*. These were not abnormalities or the *ad hoc* exactions of greedy officials, but seem to have been an integral part of the guild's tributary relationship with the government.

This does not mean to say that this was the ideal state of affairs to which either the guild or the government aspired. The kyebang yesong, one of the Myŏnjuhŏn's heaviest burdens of cash tribute, seems to have been a type of abuse that was recognised by the government as early as the mid-18th century. The Chief State Councillor (*yŏng'ujjong* 領議政) described it as a form of collusion between merchants and petty officials, whereby the former would pay the latter to exempt them from certain tax and corvée duties. This was essentially a usurpation of the taxation system for the private profit of officials and the *yŏng'ujjong* advised that it be severely forbidden.<sup>51</sup> At least one hundred years later it still seems to have been in existence, although in the case of the Myŏnjuhŏn it is not clear exactly what the guild received in return for its numerous payments.

## Structure of the Myŏnjuhŏn

The structure of the Myŏnjuhŏn appears to have been rather complex and bureaucratic, with a relatively large number of official positions and a number of mutual funds, each with their own set of accounts. Since the guild's book of regulations (*ibŭi*) is missing from the surviving Myŏnjuhŏn documents, any understanding of the internal structure of the organisation must be based on indirect evidence from the surviving account books and inference from what is known about other sijŏn.

In common with the organisations of other sijŏn and the organisations of *pobusang* (back and pack peddlers), the Myŏnjuhŏn had two administrative sections, the Taebang 大房 and the Pibang 裨房. The former was the senior governing body of the guild, while the latter seems to have been largely responsible for providing corvée

labour to the government and controlling the ordinary members. Besides these, the guild also maintained a number of *so* and *kye* which are probably best understood as mutual funds, each one with specific income and expenses and a specific function, often associated with the provision of *chinbae* in one form or another. There were also a number of officers, called *ch'aji* 次知, who had responsibility for particular aspects of the guild's operation, such as receiving payment from the government or preparing *pangmul*. Besides the *ch'aji* there were *yusa* 有司, who appear to have been selected from the membership on a rotating basis and were responsible for the everyday accounts of the *Taebang* for a five-day period. The guild also had two—or possibly more—clerks called *chosa* 曹司. The *Myŏnjuhŏn* had another official, called a *p'yemak* 弊莫, whose function has not yet been determined. This official was obviously important, as he were always listed in a senior position in lists of allowances and also a received a monthly cash allowance of five *nyang*, which is recorded in the guild's *Taebang hoegye ch'aek*.

Table 4 gives an outline of the hierarchy of the *Myŏnjuhŏn*, based on charts in the *Tŭngnok* detailing allowances for members. It should be noted that some of the categories are actual official positions, while others, such as *samchwa* and *kunjung*, are ranks and therefore indicate the position of non-office-holding members according to their age-based status within the guild.

## *The Taebang*

### A) PERSONNEL AND FUNCTION

Forming the senior body of the guild, the *Taebang* had an executive of six members in three grades. Acting as representative for the whole organisation was the *taehaengsu*, who was appointed at least once every two months from among the senior members of the guild. This was possibly done by a vote of the whole membership, as was the case in other *sijŏn* such as the *Ipjŏn*. Along with the *taehaengsu*, two *kongwon* (*sanggongwon* and *hagongwon*) were appointed to take care of general business with him. The most senior members of the *Myŏnjuhŏn*, though, appear to have been the permanent executive of three *yŏngwi* 領位, headed by the *toyŏngwi*. Below him were the *pyŏngwi* and *samyŏngwi*. They all held their positions for life and when one died, the *yŏngwi* immediately below would step up to take his position.<sup>52</sup> The *yŏngwi* also presumably had some control over the appointment of the *taehaengsu*, and acted as his advisors.<sup>53</sup> It seems that other senior members of the guild without official positions were also part of the *Taebang* and had the right to be appointed to its positions.<sup>54</sup> These senior members were those who had attained one of the three membership ranks of *sipchwa*, *ojwa* and *samchwa*, which were almost certainly related to age, and therefore also to length of membership.<sup>55</sup>

The fact that the most of the account books for the *Myŏnjuhŏn*'s various funds

**Table 4: Structure of the Myŏnjujŏn**

<b>Taebang</b> 大房		
taehaengsu 大行首		
toyŏngwi 都領位	puyŏngwi 副領位	samyŏngwi 三領位
<i>sanggongwon</i> (上) 公員		<i>hagongwon</i> (下) 公員
samchwa 三座		
p'yemak 弊莫		
ch'aji 次知		
<i>nanjŏnch'aji</i> 亂塵次知, <i>pangmulch'aji</i> 方物次知, <i>sujŏngch'aji</i> (2) 修正次知, <i>sugach'aji</i> (2) 受價次知, <i>ch'anjŏngch'aji</i> 饌正次知		
ojwa 五座		
sipchwa 十座		
<b>Pibang</b> 裨房 (耳目)		
<i>Susŏk</i> 首席 ( <i>kunjung haengsu</i> 軍中行首)		
<i>(sang) soim</i> (上) 所任		<i>(ha) soim</i> (下) 所任
kunjung 軍中 (ordinary guild members)		
chosa 曹司 (2)		

Source: *Tŭngnok*

are signed off 'Taebang' with the stamp of the guild underneath indicates that the six executive members of the Taebang oversaw the majority of the activities of the guild. In many cases, particularly in the books recording payment received from the government (*suga ch'aek* 受價冊), the names of all six members are listed above the guild's stamp, perhaps showing a higher degree of direct supervision over these accounts and reflecting the large amounts of money often involved. The Taebang therefore had overall control of the guild's main function: the provision of chinbae, a task that was carried out through a number of kye or mutual funds which collected membership fees and silk from members and then returned dividends to them once the government had paid for the silk supplied.

## B) INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Taebang also had its own accounts, recording the general expenditure of the executive. These were recorded in the first instance every five days in an account book called *Iryongch'aek* and then copied up, usually every two months, to the *Taebang hoegyē ch'aek*. The Taebang's principle income was the 'rent' it levied on the Myŏnjuhŏn's various individual shops, called *pangse* 房稅/房費. In the early 1880s it received 108 nyang every two months from this source. In addition, the Taebang received money made as commission from the sale of cotton received as payment from the government<sup>56</sup> as well as money left over from funds set aside for the purchase of silk for chinbae.<sup>57</sup> Occasional fines levied on members of the Taebang also added to its income.

The everyday expenditure of the Taebang recorded in the *Iryongch'aek* includes such items as charcoal, presumably for heating the guildhall, paper for account books, paper for wrapping silk to be provided to the palace, writing brushes, monthly spirit sacrifices in the guildhall (*ponch'ŏng kosa* 本廳告祀), and many other miscellaneous items required for the running of the guildhall and the guild in general. Regular expenses also included an allowance of tobacco (munan) for the Taebang executive plus special tobacco allowances given out at certain times of the year such as *ch'usŏk* or *tano*, or to express condolences or congratulations to members of the Taebang on the occasion of marriages, deaths or other important family events. As well as tobacco, the Taebang paid for allowances of food for officials such as the suga ch'aji and a cash allowance for the p'yemak. As mentioned above, the Taebang was also responsible for the guild's annual rituals; usually a sacrifice at the Nammyo shrine in the tenth month and a purification of the guildhall in the fourth or fifth month. Finally, the everyday expenses include a variety of tribute payments to various government offices, both the regular tancha and others collected on an irregular basis such as sinsadan and subodan, as outlined in Table 3 above.

At the end of every two-month accounting period, when the Taebang's income and expenditure were written up into the *Taebang hoegyē ch'aek*, it was usually the case that there would be a small deficit (實不足文). This would then be made up by the guild's main reserve fund, the *pyongso* 補用所 ('Office for Financial Supplementation'). If, on the other hand, there was money left over (實余文), this would go into the *pyongso*.

*The Pibang*

## A) PERSONNEL AND FUNCTIONS

If the Taebang had overall responsibility for chinbae and the payment of tributes to government offices, then, as we have already seen, the Pibang was responsible for mobilising ordinary members of the Myŏnjuhŏn for corvée labour in palaces, government



offices and shrines. The Pibang therefore included all those members who had not yet attained the status of sipchwa or above, and were referred to as kunjung. Like the Taebang, the Pibang had its own executive, with the susŏk (who also seems to have been referred to as the kunjung haengsu) in the equivalent position to the taehaengsu, and two soim, most likely playing assisting roles similar to the taehaengsu's two kongwon.

Although the Taebang controlled the majority of the guild's funds, the Pibang does seem to have had two funds under its control. The principle one was called the *saengsikkye* 生殖契 and appears to have performed roughly the same function for the Pibang that the poyongso performed for the Taebang. The Pibang also controlled a second fund called the *mujugye* 質紬契, the specific purpose of which is unclear. Like the guild's other mutual funds, it collected membership fees, paid for members' funerals and loaned money. Both of these funds were ultimately subordinate to the poyongso and periodically had to borrow extra funds from it.<sup>58</sup>

#### B) INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The general accounts of the Pibang were kept in a single book called *Pang hoegye ch'aek* and entries were made at irregular intervals. The accounts show income and various kinds of expenses; however, unlike the Taebang, the Pibang did not have 'everyday' (*iryong* 日用) funds, rather, income was paid into the saengsikkye and then expenses paid out of the same fund. General expenses included similar items to the Taebang such as ink, brushes and various kinds of paper. Most entries include a number of payments for munan tobacco as described above, as well as tobacco for meetings of the Pibang and Taebang and for daily use. It appears that the Pibang sometimes had to pay for tobacco or food for members carrying out corvéé labour, although it seems that this was not usually the case.

The only income recorded in the *Pang hoegye ch'aek* is from the fines levied on the ordinary guild members that have already been discussed above. However, it seems from the rent book *Chungbu pangse ch'aek* that the saengsikkye also received money from the rent collected from guild merchants for the use of the Myŏnjuhŏn's shops, although it is not clear how much this amounted to or how it was divided between the Taebang and Pibang.

The *Pang hoegye ch'aek* was signed off by the three members of the Pibang's executive and stamped with the Pibang's own seal rather than that of the Myŏnjuhŏn used by the Taebang. Interestingly, the accounts were also verified by two further members after each entry, presumably as a way of preventing fraud or embezzlement.

#### *The Myŏnjuhŏn's mutual funds (so and kye)*

The majority of the Myŏnjuhŏn's surviving account books belonged to one or another of the guild's many mutual funds. Six of these were termed *so*, while the remaining

seven were kye, as outlined in Table 5. However, it is not easy to distinguish clearly between the functions of the two types of funds, and in some cases the terms seem to have been interchangeable.<sup>59</sup> Most of these funds had a book recording income (*ch'ahach'aek* 上下冊), which was mainly in the form of membership fees of one type or another. The size of these fees varied from fund to fund, but the most common type was called *sinch'amnye* 新參禮 or *ipch'amnye* 入參禮, literally 'newcomer's fees', and amounted to a few nyang.<sup>60</sup> The funds' expenses books were called *sangyongch'aek* 上用冊 and mainly recorded expenses for the funerals of members or their families. Most funds also had a third book called a *chŏnchang tŭngnok* 傳掌謄錄, which recorded the periodic transfer of the fund to a new officer, giving information on total income and expenses during the preceding period and also outstanding loans to individual members and the interest received on them. Interestingly, it seems that in some cases new members did not immediately pay their fund membership fees but would pay them later with interest, thus making more money for the fund.<sup>61</sup>

It might seem from the above description that the Myŏnjujŏn's mutual funds were little different to the typical funeral or lineage kye found throughout late Chosŏn Korea and performed a similar redistributive function. In the case of some of the funds, such as the Hosangso, this was probably the case: they existed solely to provide funds for funeral expenses or loans for the businesses of individual merchants and were basically the equivalent of a modern credit union. However, many of the funds appear to have had a specific purpose. As we have seen, in the case of the poyongso and the saengsikkye, that purpose was to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the guild's two administrative departments. In the case of certain of the other funds it is fairly clear from their names what their purpose was; so, for example, the *sep'yegye* was organised for the purpose of collecting silk for *sep'ye* from the membership and providing it to the government, while the *waedanso* did the same for the *waein yedan* tribute. How exactly the guild collected and then supplied the various types of tribute silk through the mechanism of its kye and *so* is a question for future research.

However, we can get some idea of how this worked by looking at the operation of the *sep'yegye*. This kye had 80 members, each contributing a variable proportion of the 400 bolts of silk that the guild was required to provide every year for the tribute to the Qing emperor. According to *Sep'ye kongan*, a document dating to the 1830s, the number of bolts provided by members depended on their status, with the six members of the Taebang executive each providing four bolts, while 15 members at the bottom of the list of 80 only supplied half a bolt each. It appears that the members actually sold the silk to the kye for a fixed price.<sup>62</sup> When the Myŏnjujŏn received payment from the government (*suga*), it got two-thirds in cash and one-third in cotton cloth amounting to 1,200 bolts. Shares of this cloth, called *kit* 衿 (袷), would then be returned to the 80 members. They would each usually receive 13 bolts, with the

**Table 5: The Myŏnjuhŏn's so and kye<sup>64</sup>**

Name of fund	Function	Income (nyang/chŏn/p'un)	Expenses
Poyongso 補用所	Main financial reserve fund for the Myŏnjuhŏn.	Surplus suga funds received for various types of silk	Various: cash tributes, sangmi, supplementing Taebang funds and other mutual funds
Waedanso 倭單所	Provision of silk for waein yedan. Possibly also played a role as a secondary reserve fund	Surplus suga funds. These were often split 50:50 between this fund and the poyongso	?
Suju iso 水紬二所	Not known	sinch'amnye 新參禮: 5 chungsangnye 重床禮: 6/2/5	Funeral expenses for members and their families plus ch'iwi expenses
Hosangso 護喪所	Funeral kye for guild members	?	Funeral expenses for members and their families
Yesonso 預先所	Not known	?	?
Pop'yeso 補幣所	Not known	Surplus funds from sep'ye suga	?
Saengsikkye 生殖契	Main fund for the Pibang	Fines from members of the Pibang	General expenses of the Pibang
Mujugye 質紬契	Paid for member's funerals and loaned money. Pibang's second fund	sinch'amnye 新參禮: 3	Funeral expenses
Sep'yegye 歲幣契	Provision of sep'ye silk. It had a permanent membership of 80	ipch'amnye 入參禮: 5	Funeral expenses
Paeksagye 白絲契	Not known	?	?
Chobigye 措備契	Not known	sinch'amnye 新參禮: 5-7/5 chungsangnye 重床禮: 4/2/5-9/3/8 p'ansillae ipch'amnye 判新來入參禮: 18/5	Funeral expenses for members and their families
T'ojugye 吐紬契	Provision of chinbae t'aju	?	?
Sjugye 水紬契	Provision of chinbae suju	?	?

Source: This information is compiled from information in the income (*ch'ahach'aek*) and expenses (*sangyongch'aek*) books of the various funds.

Taebang executive getting an extra two each, although this could vary according to current market conditions. Remaining cloth would be sold off and the proceeds added to the suga cash already received. This money would then pay for the *injŏng* tribute payments that were a part of the suga process, with any remainder being split between the guild's two principle funds, the poyongso and the waedanso.<sup>63</sup>

The other kye may not have worked in exactly the same way as the sep'yegye, but it seems likely that they worked on a similar principle, whereby members were expected to provide silk for the guild to supply to the government.

## Conclusion

The Myŏnjuhŏn was a complex guild-type organisation, protecting the interests of the domestic silk merchants of the Chosŏn capital and managing their relations with the government. As we have seen, it had not one, but two administrative bodies, each with their own functions and executive members. It also ran not one financial fund but around 13 kye-type mutual funds, each existing for a different purpose. The guild kept large premises in the centre of the capital, alongside the other main sijŏn, of which its guildhall formed a significant part. By the late 19th century, the surviving documents show that the Myŏnjuhŏn was a sophisticated organisation that had developed over a period of at least 400 years to meet the demands of both the Chosŏn government and its own members.

As a number of scholars have pointed out, the role of the sijŏn changed considerably after the upheavals of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and particularly with the introduction of the taedongbŏp (see above).<sup>65</sup> Within this context, members of the elite yugŭjihŏn guilds—the Six Guilds—like the Myŏnjuhŏn became especially important as suppliers of luxury items both for tribute to China and Japan and for provisioning royal palaces and government offices. As we can see from the Myŏnjuhŏn's account books, most of the guild's activities were related to the provision of chinbae silk (especially sep'ye and pangmul), corvée labour and the many cash tributes that were largely incidental to the process of supplying chinbae. The guild's position as a privileged government supplier thus explains much about the organisation itself. In fact, it seems unlikely that it would have had anything like as complicated a structure if it had not been for its large and complex burden of tribute trade. The Myŏnjuhŏn's close ties with state power and patronage probably also help to explain the persistence of corvée labour in the guild. At the same time, it seems that the structure and activities of the Myŏnjuhŏn can tell us much about the government's system of procurement.

This paper has also looked at functions of the Myŏnjuhŏn that were not directly related to government procurement. From this angle, the organisation has many features in common with guild-type organisations found all over the world, and particularly with

those of Qing China.<sup>66</sup> It protected the monopoly of its merchants, lent them money, looked after their funerals, held regular rituals for the well-being of its members and kept order between the merchants with a strictly hierarchical system backed up with rules, fines and regular meetings. In some aspects, the guild also had things in common with the pre-modern lineage or household organisations of China and Korea. It was in fact a complex of a number of different lineages who limited access to non-lineage entrants, and its internal organisation was one of “hierarchized persons with a differential access to a cluster of economic rights and duties.”<sup>67</sup> This is very clearly illustrated in the Myŏnjuhŏn documents, with the carefully stipulated allocation of resources—in the form of allowances of tobacco, food and sometimes cash—based on a hierarchy of age and experience, as well as the differentiation of duties between senior and junior members. So although these merchants were engaged in a somewhat heterodox activity in a bureaucratic, Confucian society, their mode of organisation closely reflected the ideological and political-economic structures of Chosŏn society at large.

To take this a step further, the Myŏnjuhŏn appears to offer a window on to pre-industrial tributary society at a number of different levels. At the level of the internal organisation of the guild itself, we can see a microcosm of the relations of production and distribution within society as a whole. The level of government-guild relations demonstrate the manner in which the late Chosŏn state collected and distributed a part of the surplus through commercial intermediaries, at the same time making numerous tributary exactions on those intermediaries. As Yi Hŏnch'ang notes, after the disturbances of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the “state came increasingly to rely on the market for the extraction and redistribution of surplus.”<sup>68</sup> Simultaneously, the chinbae system, of which the Myŏnjuhŏn and the other members of the yugŭijŏn were part, was itself intimately connected with the broader international tributary order of pre-modern East Asia. Much of the guild's existence depended on the suzerain-vassal relationship between China and Chosŏn as reflected in its sep'ye and pangmul obligations and the peer relationship between Chosŏn and Tokugawa Japan reflected in its waein yedan burden.

As was noted at the beginning of this paper, there are limitations to what the Myŏnjuhŏn documents can tell us about the activities of these 19th-century Korean merchants. However, there is much more that these detailed and complex records can reveal. This paper has ignored the broader historical context of the period in which they were created, but future research will need to look at how the guild was affected by worsening government finances, the opening of the ports and increasing Western imports. It will also need to look at the question of how the organisation reacted during this period to price fluctuations and other upheavals and how government policy attempted to deal with problems that arose in the sijŏn during Korea's decades of ‘opening’. Detailed analysis of the Myŏnjuhŏn's account books alongside government sources will hopefully be able to tell us more about these issues.

## Notes

1. Wolf 1982:82.
2. See Yi Hönch'ang 1996.
3. *Man'gi yoram*, 'Chaeyongp'yön: kakchön': 王都之制左祖右社前朝後市市者小民之賢遷係焉公家之需用資焉治國者重之.
4. Pyön Kwangsök 2001:240.
5. Ko Tonghwan 1995.
6. For general information on the sijön system and its development see: Pyön Kwangsök 2001; Ko Tonghwan 2002; Ch'oe Pyöngmu 1958; Yu Wondong 1994.
7. Ko Tonghwan 1995.
8. Kawai Hirotami 河合弘民 (1872–1918) was a Japanese historian who collected a large number of documents relating to Korea's economic history. It is likely that he was able to obtain the Myönjujön documents at around the time that the guild finally collapsed in the early 1910s. At that time he appears to have been assistant principal of the Technical School of the Oriental Society in Seoul (*Japan Biographical Encyclopaedia and Who's Who*, p.552).
9. *Ilsöngnok*, Kojong 1st year, 12th month, 26th day. See note 14 below.
10. This, along with some other clues, would seem to indicate that the guild itself did not have a role in the buying of silk, but rather that each individual merchant had to provide a certain quantity of silk to the guild so that it could fulfil its duties to the government.
11. *Söngjong sillok* book 181, 16th year, 7th month.
12. *Süngjöngwon ilki*, Chöngjo 12th year, 11th month, 5th day; *Pibyönsa tünngnok* book 234, Hönjong 13th year, 1st month, 25th day.
13. A *k'an* is a traditional measurement equivalent to the space between two columns or roughly 1.8 metres.
14. *Ilsöngnok*, Kojong 1st year, 12th month, 26th day: 綿紬慶市民等訴則以爲日前失火時居接都家五十餘間及坐市守直房四十間合九十餘間盡爲被燒各項進排措備物種與舉行文簿一未收拾云矣.
15. Pyön Kwangsök 2001:265.
16. Here I have referred to the document entitled *Tünngnok*.
17. *Tünngnok*, p.46.
18. Pyön Kwangsök 2001:40; Ch'oe Pyöngmu 1958:383.
19. It is clear that the guild did have such a document, as it is recorded in their guildhall inventory *Chammul torok ch'aek*.
20. Ko Tonghwan provides an outline of the entrance requirements of a number of sijön; see Kop Tonghwan 2002:68–70.
21. Table 5 below gives figures for *p'ansillaein* fees for entering one of the guild's funds called the *chobigye*.
22. This can be seen in documents such as *Sep'ye kongan*, which list names of members.
23. See, for example, *Waein yedan sugach'aek*, 1870, 2nd month. It states that shares of *suga* were given to 113 current members plus seven new members and five deceased members.

24. Ko Tonghwan 2002:72.
25. See note 12 above.
26. The Myŏnjuhŏn's *Tŭngnok* stipulates that the nanjŏn ch'aji is responsible for delivering cash 'gifts' to these two offices. The guild also paid another sort of annual cash tribute directly to the Hyŏngjo's Kŭmnanbang 禁亂房, an office apparently associated with the prevention of illegal trade.
27. Pyŏn Kwangsŏk 2001:51.
28. Books recording funeral expenses include *Sujiso sangyongch'aek*, *Sep'yegyegye sangyongch'aek*, *Chobigye sangyongch'aek*.
29. Ko Tonghwan 2002:83–4.
30. *ibid*:81. It is interesting to note that there is often a Kwanu/Guan-yu shrine where Chinese people are doing business. Accounts from the 1960s state that long after the sijŏn merchants had disappeared it was mostly Chinese who visited the Tongmyo (East Kwanu shrine) in Seoul.
31. *Taebang hoegyegye ch'aek*, 1888, 10th month: 南廟致誠文壹佰捌拾兩.
32. *Taebang hoegyegye ch'aek*, 1885, 5th month: 誠主致誠都家辦備貳拾兩.
33. *Pang hoegyegye ch'aek*, 1881, 7th month, 27th day: 劉首席姪女慘憾時間安南草壹斤價文肆分.
34. *ibid*, 1880, 11th month, 21st day: 吳三領位孫女婚禮時間安南草壹斤價文參錢貳分.
35. *ibid*, 1881, 4th month, 28th day: 朴上任楸行時間安南草價文參錢貳分.
36. *ibid*, 1880, 11th month, 21st day: 種種大神房糾斗時南草價文壹兩貳錢.
37. *Taebang hoegyegye ch'aek*, 1888, 10th month, 6th day: 池副領位患候平復後酒接拾伍兩; 1883, 5th month, 2nd day: 白上公員兒憾慰孟拾兩.
38. *Tŭngnok*, pp.13–20.
39. Ko Tonghwan 2002:70–72.
40. *Pang hoegyegye ch'aek*, 1884, 5th month, 2nd day: 白在度座上前言語不恭故損徒罰壹兩伍錢.
41. *Pang hoegyegye ch'aek*, 1884, 10th month, 2nd day: 崔光錫大房使喚全不顧見故房令拒逆罰壹兩.
42. *Pang hoegyegye ch'aek*, 1884, 1st month, 24th day: 壬午十二月等內任席金錫賢劉鎮奎中部房稅錢拾壹兩各房上下冊子落漏故母過永損徒罰參兩.
43. *Man'gi yoram*, 'Chaeyongp'yŏn: kakchŏn, yubun kakchŏn'.
44. A Korean bolt of cloth (*p'il*) was roughly 12 metres of cloth with a width of 61 centimetres (see Lee Ki-baik:225).
45. Based on entries from *T'aju suga ch'aek* for the period 1873–1881.
46. This figure is approximate and was not supplied annually. Ch'ŏngin yedan was only provided on certain occasions such as a state funeral in Chosŏn or China when a special envoy would be sent to Beijing. The amount of silk could vary but according to figures given in *Ch'ŏngin yedan suga ch'aek*, it was typically 283 bolts. The government diplomatic manual *T'ongmun'gwan chi* also gives details of yedan, but seems to vary from the figures found in the above account book (*T'ongmun'gwan chi, kugyŏkp'yŏn*, pp.226–31).

47. *Haenggun*, 1884, intercalary 5th month, 8th day: 美國使臣出去時封斗軍捌名.
48. Ko Tonghwan 1997:99; Pyŏn Kwangsök 2001:72.
49. This information comes from a variety of Myŏnjujŏn documents, including *Tŭngnok*, *Taebang hoegye ch'aek*, *Ilyongch'aek*, *Poyongso sangyongch'aek*, *Kakch'ŏ kyebang yesong*.
50. *Tŭngnok*: 本署〔平市署〕所納朔米十斗代錢六兩補用所直下事.
51. Kang Man-gil 1973:174.
52. As in 1885 for example, when puyongwi Kim Yunsik 金潤植 replaced Chŏn Tŭgyun 田得潤 as toyongwi, after the death of the latter (*Taebang hoegye ch'aek*, *Pang hoegye ch'aek*).
53. See Ko Tonghwan 2002:72–4.
54. *ibid*:73.
55. Ch'oe Pyŏngmu 1958:384.
56. For example, *Taebang hoegye ch'aek*, 1882, 11th month, 2nd day: 先受木拾同放賣口文拾兩.
57. For example, *Taebang hoegye ch'aek*, 1884, 6th month, 2nd day: 染藍水紬陸同措備余文拾壹兩捌錢.
58. *Mujugye ch'ahach'aek*, 1879, 2nd month, 14th day: 本契補縮次大房清得補用所移來文壹佰兩上下.
59. The front page of one of the Waedanso's account books is titled *Waein yedan'gye hoegye ch'aek*.
60. For example, *Mujugye ch'ahach'aek*, 1883, 7th month, 20th day: 千一煥新參禮參兩上下.
61. *Mujugye tŭngnok ch'aek*, 1882, 1st month, 21st day: 十一月日金東郁新參禮參兩二朔邊玖分本邊合參兩玖分.
62. Entries in *Sep'ye suga tŭngnok* always record the cost of the 400 bolts of silk as 2,400 nyang, giving a cost price of 6 nyang per bolt. Considering that the government appears to have paid a fixed price of 18 nyang or 9 bolts of cotton cloth per bolt of silk, this is a very low price.
63. Based on entries in *Sep'ye suga tŭngnok* for the mid-1870s.
64. This table is compiled from the income (*ch'ahach'aek*) and expenses (*sangyongch'aek*) books of the various funds.
65. Yi Hŏnch'ang 1996:473.
66. See Brian H. A. Ranson 1998.
67. Hill Gates, *China's Motor*. p.246.
68. Yi Hŏnch'ang 1996:471.

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*Pibyŏnsa tŭngnok* 備邊司謄錄

*Sŭngjŏngwon ilgi* 承政院日記

*T'ongmun'gwan chi* 通文館志

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*Iryongch'aek* (1878 and 1880) 日用錄

*Pang hoegye ch'aek* 房會計冊

*Kakpang pangse ch'aek* 各房房稅冊

*Kakch'ŏ kyebang ch'aek* 各處契房冊

*Chammul torok ch'aek* 雜物都錄冊

*Mujugye ch'ahach'aek* 質紬契上下冊

*Mujugye tŭngnok ch'aek* 質紬契謄錄冊

*Poyongso sangyong ch'aek* 補用所上用冊

*Poyongso ch'aha ch'aek* 補用所上下冊

*Chobigye sangyong ch'aek* 措備契上用冊

*Chobigye ch'aha ch'aek* 措備契上下冊

*Hosangso sangyong ch'aek* 護喪所上用冊

*Sep'yegye ch'aha ch'aek* 歲幣契上下冊

*Sep'yegye sangyongch'aek* 歲幣契上用冊

*Sep'ye kongan* 歲幣貢案

*Sep'ye suga tŭngnok* 歲幣受價謄錄

*Chinhŏn suga ch'aek* 進獻受價冊

*Suju suga ch'aek* 水紬受價冊

*Sujuiso sangyongch'aek*

*T'aju suga ch'aek* 吐紬受價冊

*Waein yedan suga ch'aek* 倭人禮單受價冊

*Ch'ŏngin yedan suga ch'aek* 清人禮單受價冊

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