Finding aid for the Won Tai Sohn papers 3029

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USC Libraries East Asian Library
2014 June
Doheny Memorial Library
3550 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, California 90089-1825
URL: http://libraries.usc.edu/locations/east-asian-library
Language of Material: Korean
Contributing Institution: USC Libraries East Asian Library
Title: Won Tai Sohn papers
creator: Sohn, Won Tai, 1914-2004
Identifier/Call Number: 3029
Identifier/Call Number: 2082
Physical Description: 2.5 Linear Feet 2 boxes
Date (inclusive): 1917-2004
Abstract: Won Tai Sohn was a Korean American physician specializing in pathology and close friend of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Il Sung. This small collection comprises primarily printed materials created and collected by Sohn, including articles, clippings, and drafts of his memoirs regarding his relationship with Sung. It also contains photographs and certificates, and personal papers and ephemera in the form of correspondence, notebooks, resumes, cards, travel documents, parchment, and a nameplate.
Language of Material: Collection is predominantly in Korean.
Biographical Note
Won Tai Sohn was born on August 11, 1914 in Seoul, Korea. He moved to the United States and graduated from Yonsei Severance Medical School in 1945. He attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois in 1949 and finished residency in pathology at Cook County Hospital in 1952. In 1965, Sohn completed a Clinical Cytopathology course at Johns Hopkins. In 1972 he moved to Omaha, Nebraska where he served as 16 years as a staff pathologist at Bishop Clarkson Hospital. He retired from both teaching and practicing medicine in 1986. In 1992, Sohn visited North Korea, rekindling his old friendship with President at the time Kim Il Sung. In 2003, his book entitled "Kim Il Sung and Korea's Struggle: an Unconventional Firsthand History" was published by McFarland and Company.
He passed away on September 28, 2014 in Omaha, Nebraska. He was survived at the time by his wife Yoo Shin Lee, sons Dr. Carol Sohn and Rocky Sohn, and daughter Yonghi Sohn.
Scope and Contents
The Won Tai Sohn papers, 1914-2004, consist of personal papers, ephemera, printed materials, photographs, and certificates collected and created by Sohn and relating to himself, his family, and his relationship with North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Il Sung. The majority of the collection (primarily in Korean) is comprised of printed materials in the form of articles, clippings, pamphlets, books, reports, programs, and numerous early drafts of Sohn's memoirs, under its original working titles "The Divided Korean Peninsula: the Memoirs of Dr. Won Tai Sohn" and "My Relationship with Kim Il Sung (1918-1994): the Memoirs of Dr. Won Tai Sohn." The collection also contains personal photographs, albums, negatives, and certificates relating to Sohn's medical career, trip to North Korea in 1992 to visit Kim Il Sung, and familial history. The remainder of the collection comprises personal papers consisting of resumes, notebooks, correspondence, travel documents, Sohn's obituary and sympathy cards, and ephemera in the form of a name plate and a rubbing on parchment.
Organization
The Won Tai Sohn papers have been organized into the following series: 1. Printed Materials; 2. Photographs and certificates; 3. Personal papers and ephemera; 4. Realia; 5. Writings, research, and printed matter. Arrangement is chronological.
Conditions Governing Access
Advance notice required for access.
Conditions Governing Use
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Curator of the Korean Heritage Library. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the Korean Heritage Library as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.
Preferred Citation
[Box/Folder# or item name], Won Tai Sohn papers, Collection no. 3029, Korean Heritage Library, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift of the estate of Won Tai Sohn.
Processing Information
A basic resource record was completed for this collection in 2014 with materials not fully processed. Full processing of the collection was done in 2018 along with the creation of an updated full and complete finding aid. While performing this work, the archivist noted some items in the collection that were not part of the original acquisition. These included a soft cover copy of Sohn's book, "Kim Il Sung and Korea's Struggle: an Unconventional Firsthand History" and a published booklet by Kim Il Sung. Both of these items already had USC library call numbers and location information. The items were removed and placed back in their original locations. Additionally, three DVD-Rs were found within the collection relating to Sohn, Sung, and Sohn's father Sohn Jong Do, along with a letter to USC indicating they were given to the library by someone unrelated to Sohn, independent of this collection's acquisition. These items were also removed so they may be cataloged within USC Libraries East Asian audiovisual collection.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Communism -- Korea (North) -- Archival resources  
Korean American physicians -- Nebraska -- Omaha -- Archival resources  
Pathology, Cellular -- Nebraska -- Omaha -- Archival resources  
Korea -- Description and travel -- Archival resources  
Korea (North) -- Politics and government -- 1948-1994 -- Archival resources  
Books  
Certificates  
Clippings  
Manuscripts  
Memoirs  
Photograph albums  
Sohn, Won Tai, 1914-2004 -- Archives  
American Society of Clinical Pathologists -- Archives  
Bishop Clarkson Memorial Hospital (Omaha, Neb.) -- Archives  
Kim, Il-sŏng, 1912-1994 -- Archives  
Sohn, Won-Yil -- Archives

**Printed materials**

- **Box 2, Folder 1**
  - [Bound compilation of article reprints on Haesok Son Chong-do Moska Charyo] undated
- **Box 2, Folder 2**
  - [Clippings on North and South Korea (in Korean and English)] undated
- **Box 1, Item 1-5**
  - "The Divided Korean Peninsula: the Memoirs of Dr. Won Tai Sohn" [individual chapter drafts] undated
- **Box 2**
  - [The Divided Korean Peninsula: the Memoirs of Dr. Won Tai Sohn (Korean draft with photos, in black binder)] undated
- **Box 2, Folder 3-4**
  - ['"The Divided Peninsula: the Memoirs of Dr. Won Tai Sohn", Korean drafts'] undated
- **Box 1, Item 6-7**
  - "The Divided Korean Peninsula: the Memoirs of Dr. Won Tai Sohn" [manuscript, 2 copies] undated
- **Box 1, Item 9**
  - "The Divided Korean Peninsula: the Memoirs of Dr. Won Tai Sohn" [manuscript in Korean] undated
- **Box 1, Item 10**
- **Box 1, Item 13**
  - "The Erosion of Western Democracy in Korea" by Admiral Won Yil Sohn, Korean Navy (Ret.) [spiral bound research study] undated
- **Box 2, Folder 9**
  - Son Won-il [clippings and pictorial history] 1930-1992
- **Box 2, Folder 10**
  - "New Pronouncing Dictionary of Plant Names" [published booklet, belonged to June Sohn] 1961
- **Box 2**
  - [Clippings books (3 black display books)] 1970-2003
- **Box 2**
  - Record book [clippings] 1976
- **Box 2, Folder 14**
- **Box 2, Folder 15**
  - Clippings [Won Tai Sohn (in English and Korean)] 1980-2002

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| Box 2, Folder 16 | [Clippings about Rev. Son Chong-do and other family members (in Korean)] 1985-2003 |
| Box 2, Folder 18 | [Newspaper clippings on North Korea trips (in Korean)] 1991 |
| Box 2, Folder 20 | [Clippings on Korean Americans (in Korean)] 1991, 1994 |
| Box 2, Folder 22 | [Dissertation: Haesok Son Chong-do ui mokhoe wa minjok unong by Pak Hwa-won] 1993-12 |
| Box 2, Folder 34 | Kim Man Yu Hospital [program] 1994-1995 |
| Box 2, Folder 24 | Kim Jong Il: Respecting the Frontrunners of the Revolution is a Noble Moral Obligation of Revolutionaries 1996 |
| Box 2, Folder 25 | DPRK 1998 |
| Box 2, Folder 26 | [North Korean newspapers] 1998 |
| Box 1, Item 11 | Taehan Min’guk Imsi Uljôngwŏn Uijang Haesŏk Son Chóng-do uí saengae wa sasang yŏn’gu by Kim Ch’ang-su, Kim Sung-il chiŭm [hardcover biography in Korean] 1999 |
| Box 2, Folder 30 | [Various published articles about Rev. Son] 2001 |
| Box 1, Item 8 | "The Divided Korean Peninsula: the Memoirs of Dr. Won Tai Sohn" [manuscript copy with letter from McFarland and Company, Inc. Publishers] 2004-02-18 |
| Box 2, Folder 31 | ["The Divided Korean Peninsula: the Memoirs of Dr. Won Tai Sohn, Final Korean Version] 2004-08-02 |

**Photographs and certificates**

| Box 2 | [Framed medical school photo] undated |
| Box 2, Folder 5 | International Cultural Society of Korea [negatives in original envelope] undated |
| Box 2, Folder 7 | Photographs [glossy and photo-printed] undated |
| Box 2, Folder 6 | [Portrait photos in cardboard frames] undated |
| Box 2, Folder 8 | [Photo history] 1917-1997 |
| Box 2 | Sixth Postgraduate Institute for Pathologists in Clinical Cytopathology Course, Johns Hopkins [framed photo] 1965-08-16-1965-08-21 |
| Box 2, Folder 12 | Honorary Membership [certificate, International Cultural Society of Korea] 1970-10-07 |
| Box 2 | Caise zhaopian yingji [photo album] 1978 |
| Box 2 | American Medical Association Physician’s Recognition Award [framed certificate] 1984-10-01 |
| Box 2 | [Expression of Gratitude, Bishop Clarkson Memorial Hospital (framed certificate)] 1988-01-26 |
| Box 2, Folder 21 | [Photographs (photo-printed, related to memoirs)] 1992-1994 |
| Box 2, Folder 27 | [Personal photos and negatives] 1998 |

**Personal papers and ephemera**

| Box 2 | [Rubbing on parchment from North Korean temple at Mt. Myohyangsan] undated |
| Box 2 | Won T. Sohn, M.D. [nameplate] undated |
| Box 2, Folder 11 | Resumes [curriculum vitae] 1970 |
| Box 2, Folder 13 | Notebooks [3 spiral, 1 writing tablet (in Korean)] 1976-1977 |
| Box 2, Folder 19 | “Toast at a banquet given in celebration of the 80th birthday of the great leader comrade Kim Il Sung” [given to Won Tai Sohn, author unknown] 1991 |
| Box 2, Folder 33 | [North Korea travel journal] 1993 |
| Box 2, Folder 23 | Correspondence 1994-1998 |
| Box 2, Folder 29 | [Travel documents - boarding passes, passport photos, departure cards] 2001 |
| Box 2, Folder 32 | [Won Tai Sohn typed obituary and sympathy cards] 2004-09-2004-10 |