

Rainer Dormels (2014)

Profiles of the cities of DPR Korea – Hoeryong

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IV.2.21. Hoeryong

Border city to China and birthplace of Kim Jong-il's mother

Hoeryong lies in the north of Harnbuk Province on the Turnen, which is one of two border rivers of the DPR Korea to the People's Republic of China. Regarding the population it is one of the smallest, but is regarded as the area one of the largest cities of the DPR Korea. Therefore, Hoeryong has referring to the whole urban space-the lowest population density of all North Korean cities.

Table Hoeryong-1. Basic data⁸³

Population	153,532 (Rank 23)
Area	1,750 km ² (Rank 3)
Population density	881./km ² (Rank 27)
Administrative units	19 <i>dong/28 ri</i> (40%) (Rank 27)
"Urban" population/"rural" population	60.2%/38.8% (Rank 26)

At Hoeryong, the middle reach of the Turnen, the river is narrow and shallow. Thus, the city is situated at a place, which has been used as crossing ever since. When the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) was founded, the first ruler, King Taejo (r. 1392-1398), took measures, to get the area in the northeast to the Turnen, where the Jurchen people originally lived, under his control. But the Jurchen fought the Koreans temporarily back to Kyongsong. Therefore, King Sejong (r. 1418-1450) ordered the construction of six garrisons (Yultjin) in Jongsong, Onsong, Hoeryong, Kyongwon, Kyonghun and Puryong, in order to strengthen the northeastern border. Later Hoeryong became *whohu*.

⁸³ Population according to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2009), 18; area according to PSC-8 (2009, 627) and administrative units according to IPA-14 (2003, 224).

During the reign of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) in China, Hoeryong increased trade with China. Hoeryong came under continental influence. Additionally, the proximity to Russia helped the city in becoming an early center of Christianity and the city relatively early came into contact with Western culture (Ko Thae-u 1992, 329).

The period of Japanese rule increased the trading activity in Hoeryong. In particular, after the Changchu-Turnen railway was opened in 1924, Hoeryong together with the city of Longjing, which lies on the Chinese side, developed into a trading center. Due to the abundance of coal and lime in this region mining was pushed forward. On the basis of harvested wood of the region Musan, a timber industry developed.

Longjing, which lies on the opposite side of Hoeryong in China, is a county-level city in the Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture of Koreans in the Jilin Province. Longjing has an area of 2,592 km² and has 250,000 inhabitants (2004). Longjing is divided into two sub districts, six towns and two townships. Opposite Hoeryong lies the township of Sanhe. A bridge connects the township with the about 5 km northwest situated city center of Hoeryong. For Chinese tourists a restaurant road was built between the Kim Jong-suk University of Education and the Hoeryong Coal Mining Machinery Factory (Yoo, Gwan-hee 2010), in which soft drink stands and restaurants serve special food, such as soup of entrails, rabbit, soup of uncurdled bean curd, maize food and chow mein (KCNA December 4, 2010).

City in the northwest of the Hamgyong mountain range

Hoeryong is located in the northwest of the Hamgyong mountain range and apart from the banks of the Turnen river in the north of the town, it is surrounded by them and by diverging mountains, so that a large basin has formed. The highest elevations in Hoeryong are the mountains Karaji-bong (1,418 m), Minsa-bong (1,428 m) and Obong-san (1,329 m). While the latter is located within the municipal area, the former marks the border with the Musan-kun and the second the border to Puryong-kun. The majority of the municipal area lies at an altitude of 500 m to 800 m.

Forest areas make up about 80% of the city (PSC-8 2009, 627). The rivers that flow through the city all flow into the Turnen. Among the most important rivers are the Hoeryong-chön, the Phariil-chön, the Poul-chön and the Ryongchön-chön.

Table Hoeryong-11. Climate values

Annual average	January temperature	August temperature	Precipitation
6.0°C (26)	-11.4°C (24)	21.0°C (26)	497.3 mm (27)

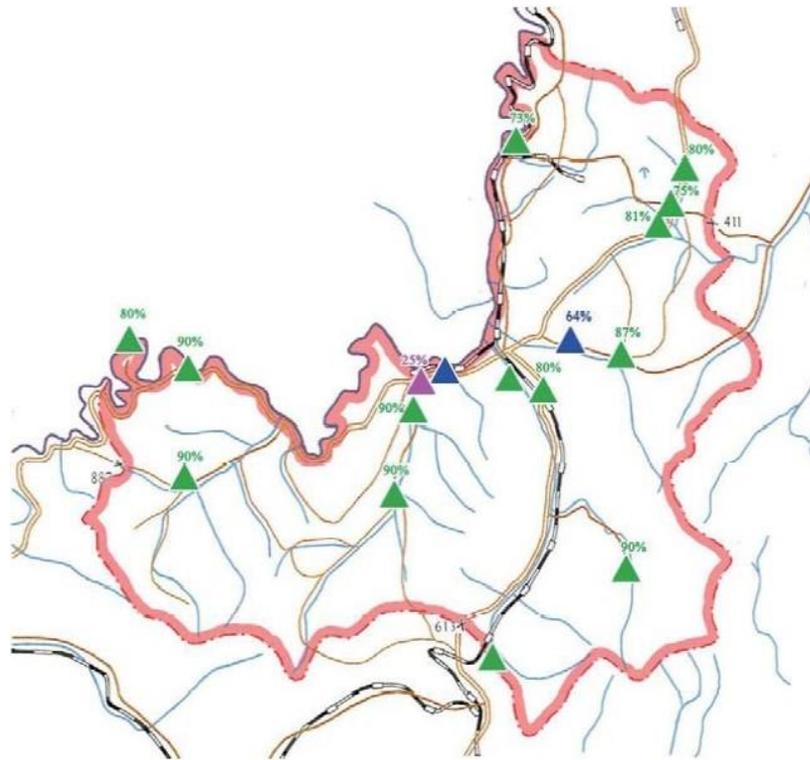


Figure Hoeryong-1. Forest area in the ri

As the city with the lowest precipitation and a city of low temperatures, Hoeryong is dominated by continental climatic factors. Only Hyesan is colder in the annual average value and in August temperatures than Hoeryong. In January—apart from Hyesan—Kanggye and Manpho are as well colder than Hoeryong.

Agricultural cultivable areas are found only in the vicinity of the basin around the city center of Hoeryong and west of it around Yusön. Apart from that forest areas predominate.

Food production and lignite mining

The municipal area is home to coal reserves and has rich forest resources. Important commercial firms are thus coal mines (Kungsim, Yusön, Hakpho) and paper manufacture.

In the north of Hambuk are many brown coal stockyards. In Hambuk are two coalfields: the northern and the southern coalfield. The northern coalfield reaches from Hoeryong to Aji, embeds in tertiary layers on the river coast of the Turnen and is a large coal field, which occupies about 60% of the total reserves of North Korea. Some of these stockyards are located on the territory of the town of Hoeryong. The most important

mines in Hoeryong are Hakbo, Kungsim and Yusön. The coal is used as a raw material for the chemical industry or as fuel for coal-fired power plants. After 1945, the engineering industry developed. There are also some industries that produce food (soy sauce, soybean paste, oil, etc.) and daily goods (shoes, soap, tooth paste, tools, kitchen appliances, sewing machines, medicines, etc.) (IPA-14, 2003, 230-232).

In 1960, mining was (with a share of the total production volume of the city of 30.1%) still the most important industry of the city. It was followed by the forest industry (17.8%) and the production of essential goods (13.1%). However, until 1984 the commercial structure of Hoeryong had greatly changed. In the meanwhile the most important industry was food production with 39.7% of the total production volume of the city, of which Hoeryong Comstarch Factory had a large share. Mechanical engineering (16.3%) had grown into the second largest industry of the city, followed by the production of essential goods (14.6%). The importance of mining declined (11.3%) (KJY-29 1990, 746).

The North Korean homepage Naenara introduces in a book about Hoeryong the newly built Hoeryong Essential Foodstuff Factory, the Hoeryong Wood Processing Factory, the Hoeryong Shoemaking Factory, the Hoeryong Unha Export Clothing Factory and the Hoeryong Paper Mill as representative factories in the city, to stress the significance of light industry in the city.

Table Hoeryong-111. Ranking (in parenthesis: number of industrial companies or cultural institutions)

Hoeryong	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	11 (15)	17 (15)	5 (26)	20 (5)	18 (24)	15
Companies-important	22 (1)	25 (0)	10 (7)		23 (5)	17 (5)
Cultural institutions			19 (4)			

Compared to its population-Hoeryong ranks 23rd among the 27 cities of North Korea -there are relatively many companies. In Hoeryong are both companies of light industry and of heavy industry, as well as mines are located within it. The very high placement in the IPA is certainly due to the fact that Hoeryong has many administrative units (*dong and ri*), where the most important companies are listed in the respective administrative unit. However, there are not many companies in Hoeryong, which are regarded as especially important.

Table Hoeryong-IV. Ranking (total number of companies in relation to the population)

Hoeryong	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	1	10	2-3-16	18	7-22	2-11

Table Hoeryong-V. Specification (in parenthesis: number of industrial companies)

Hoeryong	Light Industry	Heavy Industry	Mining	Energy
KOFC	3 (7)	26 (3)	3 (5)	–
MOU	14 (9)	26 (1)	4 (5)	–
IPA	10 (14)	24 (5)	4 (7)	–
KCNA	5 (4)	20 (1)	–	–
KIET	2 (15)	27 (5)	4 (4)	–

The specialization on mining and light industry is clear. In contrast, the heavy industry plays a relatively minor role.

In chapter III.7.3., five important companies were determined for Hoeryong. These are in three cases papermaking factories: Hoeryong Paper Production Complex, Hoeryong Paper Factory⁸⁴ and Hoeryong Craft Paper Factory---and the Hoeryong Comstarch Factory and the Hoeryong Coal Mine Machine Factory.

In the Hoeryong Paper Factory, a variety of paper types are produced (copy paper, paper with patterns, writing paper, etc.). The factory was established as a small factory during the Japanese occupation period and was destroyed during the Korean War and then rebuilt (IPA-14 2003, 232). The Hoeryong Craft Paper Factory, which has been in operation since 1980, was constructed to meet the demand for cement bags in the DPR Korea (KJY-29 1990, 346).

The construction of the Hoeryong Comstarch Factory began in 1954. At first mainly maize was processed. Over time, the range of products manufactured broadened. Among other things, they produce from biscuits, starch syrup, candy and oil to alcoholic beverages and cigarettes (IPA-14 2003, 232).⁸⁵

When Kim Jong-il visited Hoeryong in December 2010, he visited, among other places, the following three companies of light industry: the Hoeryong Taesong Tobacco Factory, the newly built Hoeryong Foodstuff Processing Factory and the Hoeryong Koryo Medicine Factory (K.CNA December 4, 2010).

One of the five important companies (as determined in chapter III.7.3) is the Hoeryong Coal Mine Machine Factory, which belongs to the heavy industry, and was founded in early 1960. Here, machines used in the mining industry are produced, such as drilling machines, conveyor belts etc. (IPA-14, 2003, 233).⁸⁶

In the far west of the municipal area in Ryongchon-ri, the iron ore mine Oryung is

⁸⁴ It is possible that the Hoeryong Paper Production Complex and the Hoeryong Paper Factory are different names of the same company.

⁸⁵ For further information: KIET (1996, 58).

⁸⁶ For further information: KIET (1996, 268-269).

located. It has been in operation since 2007. The ore is smelted in China (Choi, Kyung-soo 2010, 222). In 2006, a cooperation agreement with a company in Yanbian (China) has been completed (Choe Kyöng-su 2011, 251).⁸⁷

Through the center of the city runs the Harnbuk railway line, thereby connecting Hoeryong with Rajin (335 km) and Chongjin (about 95 km). Branch terminal lines go from Hoeryong to Yusön, Kfunsäeng to Kungsim, and Sinhakpho to Sechön. There is a motorway between Chongjin and Hoeryong. From here to Chongjin it is 91 km.

The three beauties of Hoeryong

Hoeryong is known for its "Three Beauties." The first is the beauty of women, which is characterized by a pretty face, a virtuous way of life and a persevering character. The apricots from Hoeryong are the second beauty. Famous are the White Apricots, which have a pretty, charming and fragrant bloom and the fruits are much larger than normal apricots. The White apricots taste very sweet as well. The third beauty refers to the ground in the city. In Hoeryong white clay can be found, which is used for the production of high quality porcelain (Kim Pöm-ju 2010, 204-205).

The White apricot blossom from Osan Hill

In North Korean literature it is especially emphasized that the mother of Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-suk, was born on 24th December 1917 in Hoeryong and spent her childhood there. Her birth house, about 500 m south of the 800 m high Osan hill, is thus a touristic attraction and highlight for the Hoeryong visitors, as well as the bronze statue of Kim Jong-suk, which was established in 1969 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of her death; and the Hoeryong revolutionary site, which opened in 1974, and where a large part of it is also dedicated to the first wife of Kim Il-sung (North Korea Online Travel Guide n.d.). The bond, which the North Korean propaganda wants to document between Kim Jong-suk and Hoeryong, shows in the tenn that KCNA has chosen for her: The White apricot blossom from Osan Hill.

A kun with seven rodongjagu

In 1991 Hoeryong-kun was appointed as a city (sz). The *kun* in his former form originated

⁸⁷ For further information: KOFC (2010, 480).

in 1974, when the Yusön-kun was integrated into Hoeryong-kun and Jongsöng-kun was divided on Hoeryong-kun and Onsöng-kun.

The following urbanized areas existed in Hoeryong-kun in 1974:

- Hoeryong-up
- Yusön-up, which now became a *rodongjagu*
- Mangyang-rodongjagu (founded in 1952)
- Sechön-rodongjagu (founded in 1954)
- Kungsim-rodongjagu (founded in 1961)
- Jungbong-rodongjagu (founded in 1967 in the Jongsöng-kun)

In 1989 two additional *rodongjagu* (Nammun and Subuk) were established.

Foundation of the city in 1991, two development poles, coal mines in the Northeast

In July 1991 Hoeryong was designated as a city (*si*). Hoeryong-up and the *rodongjagu* become *dong* or were split into several *dong*. In the same year the *dong* of Kangan and SaemaUl were founded, and in the south of the former *up* Jungdo-dong was created in December 1992, which is the southernmost *dong* of the city.

In Figure Hoeryong-11 we see two development poles:

- the center, which consists of the former *up* of Hoeryong-kun, the former Mangyang-rodongjagu, which had been founded in 1952, the former *rodongjagu* of Nammun and Subuk of recent date (1989), as well as the *dong* of Kangan and SaemaUl, both of which were created at the same time as the city founding in 1991.
- the former *up* of Yusön-kun in the west of the city.

In Mangyang the Manyang Mine Timber Manufacturing Plant is located. They produce blocks of wood that are used in the northern mines as pit-props (IPA-14 2003, 232). The Nammun-rodongjagu was split into the Nammun-dong and the Sanöp-dong. In the latter, the Hoeryong Coal Mine Machine Factory is located.

The Yusön-rodongjagu was divided into three *dong* in 1991 (Yusön-dong, Kyerim-dong, Pöul-dong). In Yusön-dong numerous factories are located: Hoeryong Foodstuff Factory, Hoeryong Furniture Factory, Hoeryong Cosmetics Factory, Hoeryong Clothing Factory, Hoeryong Weaving Factory, Hoeryong Instrument Factory, Hoeryong Building Materials Factory, Hoeryong Paper Production Complex, Yusön Refractory Plant (IPA-14 2003, 246-247). In the region of the former Yusön-rodongjagu, the Yusön Coal Mine is

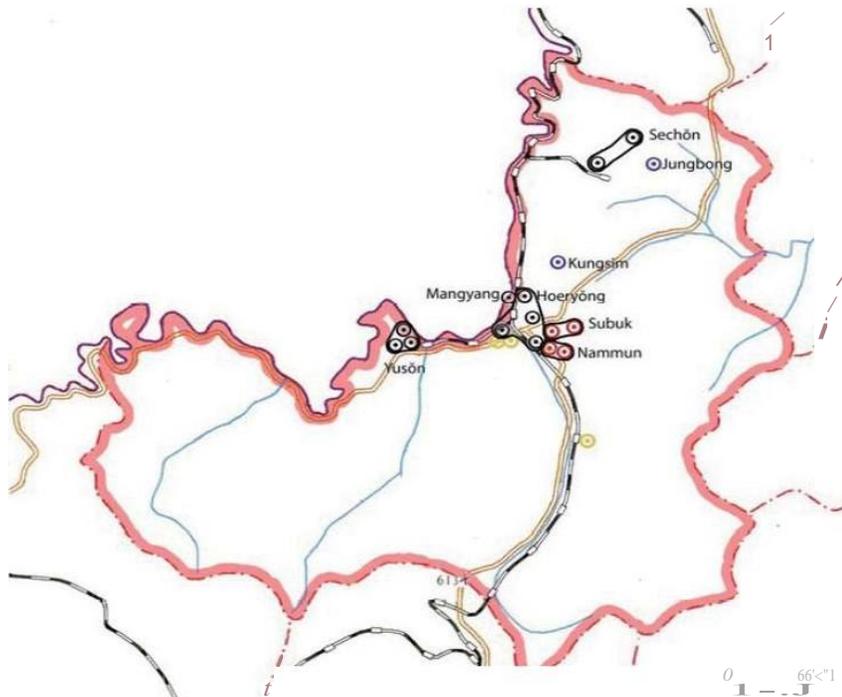


Figure Hoeryong-11. *Dang* and the former *up* and *rodongjagu*

located, which was built in 1900, and was called Kyerim Coal Mine before 1945 (KJY-29 1990, 746).

Another four *dong* are located in the northeast of the city

These *dong* emerged at the foundation of the city by converting the former *rodongjagu* of Sechön (established 1954, converted to Sechön-dong and Sinchon-dong in 1991), Kungsim (founded in 1961) and Jungbong (established in 1967).

Many coal mines are located in this region, such as the Kungsim Mine, Hak:pho Mine in Sechon and the Jungbong Mine. Kungsim is about 8km from the city center.

In the Jungbong Mine prisoners of the No. 22 Hoeryong (or Haengyöng) Political Prisoners camp may have worked, which is located in this region, about 20 km from the city center. There are different reports on whether this camp actually exists.

In 1992, Jungdo-dong emerged in the south of the city center.

The IPA does not mention any change in the urban area after its founding in 1991. Except Jungdo-dong all *dong* were already formed at the time the town was founded.

Statistics

Urbanized areas prior to the city founding (*up* and *rodongjagu*)

- 1939-1949, 1952-1991 Hoeryong-up (1)
- 1952-1991 Yusön-up (since 1974 Yusön-rodongjagu)
- 1952-1991 Mangyang-rodongjagu
- 1954-1991 Sechön-rodongjagu
- 1961-1991 Kungsim-rodongjagu
- 1967-1991 Jungbong-rodongjagu
- 1989-1991 Nammun-rodongjagu
- 1989-1991 Subuk-rodongjagu

	Dong-Formation	Dong-Splitting
1991: (18)	2	(8)
1992: (19)	1	

Hoeryong – Birthplace of Kim Jong-suk, mother of Kim Il-sung

According to North Korean history Hoeryong is the birthplace of Kim Jong-suk, the mother of Kim Jong-il, who also spent her childhood there. From all North Korean cities, is Hoeryong the one with the lowest population density. It is a border town to China with mostly small and medium companies. Hoeryong is known for its "Three Beauties" (beautiful women, beautiful apricots, beautiful earthenware). The quantitative analysis showed that compared to the population many industrial plants are located in Hoeryong. However, these are rather small and medium-sized companies. There are a low number of nationally significant assets. Hoeryong is shaped by the lignite reserves and rich forest resources, and has companies in the field of food processing, machinery and paper manufacturing.