

Rainer Dormels (2014)

Profiles of the cities of DPR Korea – Jongju

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IV.2.6. Jongju

Fortified city during the Joseon period

Jongju is an important traffic junction on the way between the capital Pyongyang and the border city of Sinuiju. As a fortified city, Jongju was highly relevant in terms of military strategy. With the highest share of “rural” population among all cities of the DPR Korea, it is the most agriculturally characterized city of the country. Jongju was not designated as a city (*si*) until 1994.

Table Jongju-I. Basic data

Population	189,742 (Rank 21)
Area	480 km ² (Rank15)
Population density	395 l./km ² (Rank 19)
Administrative units	14 <i>dong</i> /18 <i>ri</i> (44%) (Rank 25)
“Urban” population/“rural” population	54.1%/45.9% (Rank 27)

During the Joseon period, in the middle of the 15th century, a city wall in Jongju was made of soil, and then replaced with stone between 1714 and 1715, which was repeatedly rebuilt and refurbished. The city wall is located south of the Jangtae-san. Towards the West and East, the wall is built on the mountain’s ridge and in between lies an almost oval plain. On the southern side of the wall are two gates. The remains of the wall are still maintained (IPA-5 2003, 227).

When an insurgency against the discrimination of the population living in the Phyongan-Province was countered, the insurgents entrenched themselves in the fortified city of Jongju. In 1812, the leader of the rebellion was murdered and the rebellion broke down.

During the Korean War Jongju also played a military strategic role, when Jongju served as a marching-through-area for the South Korean as well as UN troops heading to the North as well as a marching-through-area for Chinese troops on their way southwards. Also nowadays, the army of the DPRK has several emplacements at the sea coast of Jongju.

Famous for rice but also for specialized crops such as chestnuts, fruits, tobacco

Jongju is located in the lowlands on the west coast of the Phyongbuk Province and borders in the northwest on Kusong-si. The city region consists predominantly of flat terrain or downs. The highest elevations are situated at the borders of the municipal area like the Simwŏn-san (566 m) in the East at the border of Kwaksan-kun and the Puldang-san (426 m) in the North at the border of Kusong-si. Between the mouth of the 38 km long Talchhŏn-gang and offshore islands broad areas of land spread out, which was extracted from the sea through impoldering.

For a long time the Talchhŏn-gang was popular as a relaxation resort due to its clear water and fine sand (Chosun Ilbo October 23, 1995). The surrounding of the Pongmyŏng-reservoir is also adapted for leisure space. The Pongmyŏng-reservoir (ca. 2 km²) dams the headwater of the Talchhŏn-gang, which has its origin at Kilsang-san (in the South of Kusong-si). It is an important source of water in the Yalu-irrigation system. Amongst

others, also carp are raised here (IPA-5 2003, 173).

In the North of the municipal area the 38.9 km long Changsuthan-gang rises, which has a drainage area of 145 km². It is dammed in the headwater, which forms the ca. 2 km² big Unjon-reservoir at the eastern border of the municipal area towards Unjon-kun and contributes largely to the raise of the Unjon-terrain.

The forest covers 42% of the municipal area and where oaks as well as pines are strongly represented.

This region is in regards to agriculture one of the most important locations of this province. The arable land is 40% of the municipal area. Important cereals are amongst others rice, corn, and millet, whereas rice accounts

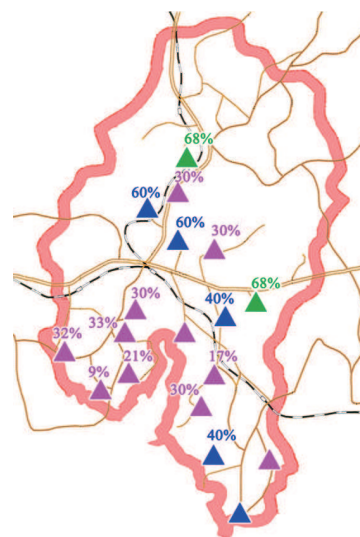


Figure Jongju-I. Forest area in the ri

Table Jongju-II. Climate values

Annual average	January temperature	August temperature	Precipitation
9.6°C (13)	-6.6°C (15)	23.8°C (12)	1,127.2 mm (7)

for 70% and corn for 25% of the harvested crop amount. Already since the Japanese occupation, rice from the Jongju-terrain is widely known for its delicious taste. In the 70s rich harvest still could be reaped, however due to soil acidification and scarcity of fertilizer, the cereal amount shows gradually a negative trend line. Fruits that are mainly raised in Jongju are apples, pears, peaches, and plums. So-called Jongju-royal-chestnuts, which can also be found in Kwaksan-kun and Sonchon-kun, are still well known. Everywhere in the city chestnut trees are to be seen and in the summer, the unique smell of chestnut flowers stings one's nose. Tobacco is also raised, although there is no tobacco factory in Jongju. The harvested leafs are amongst others processed further in factories in Sonchon and Ryongsong. Recently, in order to attain currency, silkworm cocoons and peppermint are also raised in Jongju (Chosun Ilbo October 23, 1995).

On the Ae-do island, which is more than 10 km away from Ilhae-ri at the southern coast of the municipal area, as well as at the sea coast fisheries are operated on a small scale. Approximately 3,000 people live on Ae-do (Chosun Ilbo October 23, 1995). On Ae-do there can be found the Jongju Fishery Station, which was founded in 1961, is located. Other than fishery, seashells are cultivated here and there are also other facilities where seafood is manufactured (IPA-5 2003, 175).

One specialty of the city is piglets from the northern Ryongpho.

Phyongbuk Smeltery and numerous factories relevant to agriculture

Important industrial sectors of this city are amongst others metalworking, machine engineering (especially manufacturing and reparation of agricultural vehicles and machines) as well as the food, textile, chemical, and pharmaceutical industries. Conserved fruits and other further processed fruit products are regarded as specialty of the city (IPA-5 2003, 74).

Table Jongju-III. Ranking (in parenthesis: total number of companies or cultural institutions)

Jongju	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	25 (5)	23 (9)	20 (7)	22 (4)	21 (20)	24
Companies-important	23 (1)	26 (0)	14 (6)		24 (5)	18 (5)
Cultural institutions			20 (3)			

Table Jongju-IV. Ranking (Total number of companies in relation to population)

Jongju	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	25	22	17-7-19	22	20-24	24-15

Jongju has fewer companies than it could have been expected in regards to its population. However, this is not surprising due to the agricultural orientation of the city. Comparatively high, though, is the number of important companies.

Table Jongju-V. Specification (in parenthesis: total number of companies)

Jongju	Light Industry	Heavy Industry	Mining	Energy
KOFC	-	1 (5)	-	-
MOU	21 (4)	4 (4)	10 (1)	-
IPA	25 (1)	1 (6)	-	-
KCNA	19 (1)	3 (3)	-	-
KIET	5 (10)	14 (10)	-	-

Almost every source implies for this city a distinct specialization towards heavy industry.

In chapter III.7.3. five companies are regarded as important for this city: Phyongbuk Smeltery, October 30 Factory “October 30” (Jongju Bearing Factory), Jongju Tractor Accessory Factory, Jongju Microelement Perphosphoric Acid Lime Fertilizer Factory and

the Jongju Export Garment Factory.

The Phyongbuk Smeltery is of great importance for the foreign exchange revenue of North Korea (Chosun Ilbo October 23, 1995). Mainly gold, silver, and copper are smelted (KOFC 2010, 242), but also phosphate fertilizer etc. is produced here. The smeltery is located 800 m southeast of the train station in Wölyang-ri at the riverside of Talchön-gang. In total 2,300 people are employed there (KOFC 2010, 238). The total area size is about 264,000 m² (KOFC 2010, 238) or 388,400 m² (IPA-5 2003, 175). The construction work started in August 1979. In 1983 the first stage was completed and so it went into operation, in 1991 another part of the smeltery was finished. In 2009 in some parts of the building restoration and renovation work was carried out. The smeltery benefits from the favorable transport-geographical position of Jongju, since the railway line from Pyongyang to Sinuiju and the Phyongbuk-line as well as the road from Kaesong to Sinuiju pass through the city. The smeltery is connected to the rail network with a branch terminal line. The smeltery obtains electrical energy out of the Chöngchöngang Thermal Power Plant (Pakchon-kun). The raw materials that are to be processed are most commonly brought from nearby (KOFC 2010, 239).

The factory “October 30” (Jongju bearing factory), which was set into operation in 1979 is also of importance.

Many companies in Jongju are related to agriculture. For example, the Jongju Tractor Accessory Factory, which produces not only tractor accessories but also many other machines that are used in agriculture. The total area of the factory amounts to 116,000 m² (KOFC 2010, 264). In Jongju there are also other factories that produce or repair farm machineries. In the Jongju Microelement Perphosphoric Acid Lime Fertilizer Factory mainly phosphate fertilizer is produced.

The Jongju Export Garment Factory has a total area of 11,500 m² and is in production since 1993. On orders from foreign countries, various garments are manufactured here. Amongst others, those articles are exported to Southeast Asia, Germany, Austria, and many other countries (IPA-5 2003, 175).

Apples, pears, peaches, and plums that are harvested in Jongju are mainly processed to tins in fruit processing factories. Those factories are completely financed by the group of overseas Koreans in Japan. However, it is said that since sugar is missing in recent times, many products are spoiled (Chosun Ilbo October 23, 1995).

The Factory No. 25 mainly produces vaccines against hemorrhagic fever (yellow fever) and paratyphoid fever (KOFC 2010, 389).

Other than that, one of four big deposits of rare-earth that exist in DPR Korea is in Jongju. It is located in the North of the municipal area close to Kohyön-dong. Already in 1961 it was discovered, but until now only small amounts of zirconium were mined. Rare-earth is not yet promoted (Nam Mun-hüi 2012).

Traffic center at the northern Yellow sea coast

Jongju is located 105 km away from the provincial capital Sinuiju and has developed to a transport interchange in the place where the Phyongbuk-line, which has been opened in 1939 and connects Jongju to Chōngsu (Sakju-kun), branches off from the main rail line towards Sinuiju and Pyongyang. The road, which connects Sinuiju and Pyongyang, goes through the municipal area. Northwards goes a road to Kusong-si, a turnoff goes to Taechōn-kun. This state road towards Kusong, which is not tarred, goes over the dike of Talchōn-gang over Taekwan-kun and Sakju-kun and further to Sakju-kun, which is located at the riverside of the Yalu.

In the South there is maritime traffic among others towards Cholsan-peninsula and Sinmi island (Sonchon-kun).

Jongju Youth Gymnasium – a landmark of the city

The Jongju Youth Gymnasium was opened in 1986, has a total area of 7,450 m² and has three floors. In the first and second floor are the spectator seats, which can hold 3,500 persons. For travelers, it is sort of a landmark of the city Jongju, because it is clearly visible from a train.



Figure Jongju-II. Youth Gymnasium (2006)



Figure Jongju-III. Building of a house (2006)



Figure Jongju-IV. Region west of the train station (2012)



Figure Jongju–V. Region east of the train station (2012)

Home of pioneers – from writers to cult founders

Traditionally, Jongju is considered home of many scholars. During the Joseon period the number of people from this city, who passed the state exam, was especially high. Before 1945 Jongju was regarded as “city of pioneers” or “city of personalities,” since various leaders of different fields came from this city. Its position between China and Seoul was a reason why this region came relatively early into contact with Christianity. In particular due to the influence of the Christian Osan-school, which was founded in 1907, Jongju was considered to be a region of high education and sophisticated mentality. People born in Jongju or Osan Elementary School-attendees were among others writers such as Yi Kwang-su (1892-1950) and Kim So-wŏl (1902-1934). Also the painter Yi Jungsŏp (1916-1956) and the philosopher Ham Sŏk-hŏn (1901-1989), who was considered as “the Korean Gandhi,” attended the Osan Elementary School.

As a 14-year-old the founder of the Unification Church, Moon Sun Myung (1920-2012), attended the Osan Elementary School for one year. Moon was born in 1920 in Jongju as the fifth child of eight. Later, Moon visited DPR Korea and was welcomed by Kim Il-sung in 1991. After that, Moon acquired two big hotels in the capital Pyongyang. Furthermore, the government gave its consent to the Unification Church to build a pilgrimage site in Jongju. Where the Osan Elementary School once was located as well as in Sŏju-dong, there are secondary educational institutions with focus on agricultural disciplines (Chosun Ilbo October 23, 1995; IPA-5 2003, 176).

Internal structure such as the one in a rural county

In 1952 the then Jongju-kun was narrowed by splitting off a part in the West in order to rebuild the Kwaksan-kun. In the East a part was split off to found the Unjon-kun. The



Figure Jongju-VI.

remaining Jongju-kun was designated as city in August 1994.

When Jongju-kun was appointed to a city in 1994, next to the administration center, four *rodongjagu* exist. The oldest of them was the Aedo-rodongjagu which was founded in 1953 on the same-named island. Approximately 3,000 people there live off fishing. The other three *rodongjagu* were built in 1992. Due to the location of the *rodongjagu* and the former *up*, three development poles are identifiable within the municipal area:

1. Center (former *up* and Söju)

The city is dominated by a center, which is located where the former administrative center of the county and the former *rodongjagu* Söju has been situated. Within and around the center of rural Jongju the most important industries of the city are localized.

2. Ryongpho

The northern part is with the former laborers' district Ryongpho, which is located to the East of Pongmyöng-reservoir, which is the second development pole of the city. In the Ryongpho region and neighboring Kohyön deposits of rare-earth and other natural resources are located. The breeding of piglets in Ryongpho has a good reputation.

3. Osan

The third development pole is Osan-dong, which is located in the South of the city with its fruit plants. Osan is known for the Christian Osan Elementary School founded in 1909, which was attended by many prominent Koreans. Today, it is an agricultural college.

At the same time as of the city founding in 1994, *up* and *rodongjagu* were divided into different *dong*. Further four *dong* emerged due to the conversion of *ri*. In the Southwest of the city center, Sangdang-dong and southeastern Sinchön-dong were founded. Kohyön-dong is located in the East of Ryöngpho and Oryong-dong at the eastern border also in the North of the municipal area.

Jongju (1994) 14 *dong*

	<i>Dong-Formation</i>	<i>Dong-Splitting</i>
1952 (1)	<i>up</i>	
1953 (2)	1 <i>rodongjagu</i>	
1992 (5)	3 <i>rodongjagu</i>	
1994 (14)	4	(5)

Jongju – Agricultural center at the coastal flatland

Jongju is a small rural town in the flatland of the Yellow Sea coast. An important factor for the city growth is its beneficial position in terms of traffic between central Korea and the crossing to China in the northwestern part of the peninsula. Jongju has historic importance because of the city fortification and the Christian Osan Elementary School. The most important industry is the Phyongbuk Smeltery, whose construction work started in 1979.