

**Rainer Dormels (2014)**

## **Profiles of the cities of DPR Korea – Kusong**

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Find an introduction to the project at

<http://www.univie.ac.at/koreanologie/index.php?id=digital-north-korea0>

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## IV.2.5. Kusong

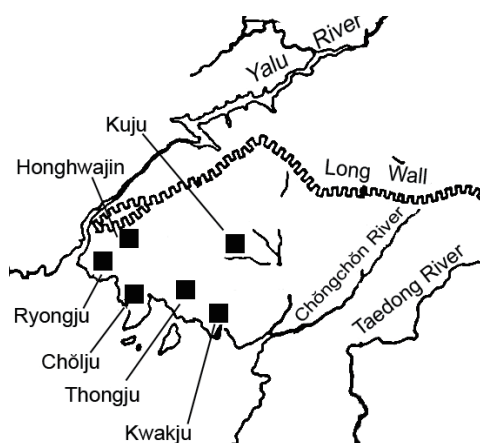
### One of the Kangdong Six Garrison Settlements from the Koryo era

Kusong is located in the center of the Phyongbuk Province. In 1967 the appointment as a city (*si*) was made. Already in the Koryo era a fortified wall was built. After the Korean War an intermountain industrial location was created in the city, especially due to the construction of the Machine Tool Factory. Kusong is one of the smallest cities of the DPR Korea due to its population size, although it is the largest city according to area size of the Phyongbuk Province.

**Table Kusong-I.** Basic data

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Population                              | 196,515 (Rank 19)                            |
| Area                                    | 653 km <sup>2</sup> (Rank 13)                |
| Population density                      | 301 l./km <sup>2</sup> (Rank21)              |
| Administrative units                    | 25 <i>dong</i> /18 <i>ri</i> (58%) (Rank 18) |
| "Urban" population / "rural" population | 79%/21% (Rank 17)                            |

During the time of the Koryo king Kwangjong (949-975) Korea tried to extend its empire to the Yalu, which resulted into conflicts with the neighbouring Khitan. The latter tried to manage an invasion into Koryo. However, Sō Hūi was able to persuade the Khitan to retreat, who also were in conflicts with Sung China. This was accomplished, because for the Khitan this country wasn't important due to the Jurchen, who lived there. After this retreat of the Khitan, Koryo built six Kangdong Garrison Settlements (east of the River). One of them was Kuju, the current Kusong. Therefore in 994 the fortification of Kuju was built (Lee, Ki-baik 1984, 125). Parts of the fortress are still preserved and are nowadays the most important attractions of the city. The South Gate, which is the largest and most important of the four gates of the wall, was restored several times as



**Figure Kusong-I.** Kangdong Six Garrison Settlements (based on Lee, Ki-baik 1984, 127 and subsequently modified)

well as rebuilt. The current gate dates back to the build-up in 1836. However, the gate was destroyed during the Korean War, and then reconstructed in 1979.

### Typical basin position

Kusong has evolved within a typical valley. The city center is located in the middle of the municipal area within the Kusong-basin position. It is an erosion basin, in which at first the softer granite layers were eroded out. The basin is almost identical with the catchment area of the Chõngbang-gang and the city area of Kusong. Not only the Chõngbang-gang, but also its tributary river, the Tongmun-chõn, is of great importance. The basin has an East-West extension of 21 m, a North-South extension of 30 m and therefore has an oval shape (IPA-5 2003, 112). The Southern part of the basin is also called Panghyõn-level. Consequently this region offers especially good conditions for agriculture.

The peripheral parts of the municipal area consist mostly of hilly and mountainous country. In the western margin of the city, the Chõnma mountain chain spreads out in the direction of North-South and here there are also the high mountains of Chõngryong-san (920 m), which is the highest mountain of the city, and the Kilsang-san (594 m). The more you go into the center of the city, the flatter the land is. The rivers of the city all flow into the Chõnbang-gang and are short. The Chõnbang-gang rises from the North of Kusong on Chasu pass. It flows in the North-Eastern parts of Thaechon-up into the Taeryõng-gang, is 57.2 km long, and also famous for its clear and clean water. On the Chõnbang-gang and in its influence area, there are reservoirs, for example the Phungsan reservoir, the Choyang reservoir, the Tõksang reservoir. These reservoirs water the Panghyõn plain (Kusong-si) and the Andüre plain (Thaechon-kun). They have a great importance for the water supply of this region.

The 38 km long Talchõn-gang rises from the foot of the Kilsang-san in the Southwest of the city region and flows through Jõngju into the Yellow Sea. The Talchõn-gang is the water source for the reservoirs of the Phungmyõng and thus has an important role for the irrigation of Jõngju.

**Table Kusong-II.** Climate values

| Annual average | January temperature | August temperature | Precipitation  |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 9.1°C (18)     | -7.6°C (21)         | 23.6°C (13)        | 1,290.9 mm (3) |

Kusong is one of the rainiest areas of North Korea. 62% of the city area is accounted by forests.

The agricultural cultivable land is 22.6% of the municipal area. Livestock farming is

also represented. The Chicken Farm Kusong is nationally famous. Fruit cultivation also exists, especially apples, pears, peaches and other fruits, mostly grown in the South and in the West of the city. Furthermore, the silk worm breeding has developed. Another special culture is the development of beekeeping in Namhŭng-ri, Ryongphung-ri, Namsan,ri, Chŏngsong-ri, Wonjin-ri, Unyang-dong and Tæan-ri.

### Mechanical Engineering and Textile Industry

In the period of the Japanese occupation the technical craftsmanship of flax and hemp dominated this area (IPA-5 2003, 113). Before 1945 Kusong was also known for its Kusong and Samsŏng Goldmines (Ko Thae-u 1992, 174). Basic industries are the mechanical engineering industry and the textile industry. Therefore, important products are lathes, different drilling machines and suit material. In the regional factories groceries, articles of everyday use, paper, pharmaceuticals, etc. are produced. Widely known are the iron products, for example a lot of iron products like motorised mills, fans, bicycles, as well as school supplies, resin products and wood products.

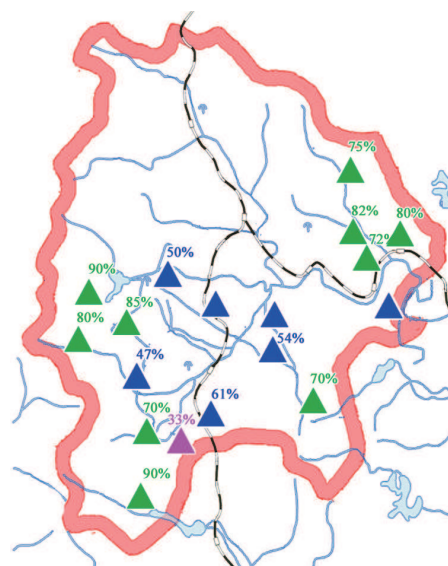


Figure Kusong-II. Forest area in the ri

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

| Kusong                | KOFC   | MOU    | IPA    | KCNA   | KIET    | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| Companies-total       | 26 (4) | 25 (6) | 20 (7) | 26 (2) | 25 (16) | 25     |
| Companies-important   | 13 (3) | 18 (1) | 19 (4) |        | 19 (8)  | 24 (2) |
| Cultural institutions |        |        | 24 (2) |        |         |        |

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

| Kusong            | KOFC | MOU | IPA      | KCNA | KIET  | Total |
|-------------------|------|-----|----------|------|-------|-------|
| Companies – total | 27   | 25  | 18–14–24 | 26   | 24–14 | 25–24 |

In all sources Kusong is recognised as a city, which has a small number of companies, in comparison with its population. However, armament industries, which are assumed to be located in Kusong, are not included in the sources.

**Table Kusong–V.** Specification (in parenthesis: number of companies)

| Kusong | Light Industry | Heavy Industry | Mining | Energy |
|--------|----------------|----------------|--------|--------|
| KOFC   | 12 (1)         | 5 (3)          | –      | –      |
| MOU    | 3 (5)          | 22 (1)         | –      | –      |
| IPA    | 8 (4)          | 11 (3)         | –      | –      |
| KCNA   | 10 (1)         | 7 (1)          | –      | –      |
| KIET   | 5 (8)          | 14 (8)         | –      | –      |

On grounds of these statistics, it is not possible to draw a decision whether the industrial structure of Kusong shows an obvious specialisation on heavy industry or on light industry. However, due to the importance of the Machine Tool Factory and the assumed armament factories on the city grounds, a stronger presence of heavy industry in the city can be proclaimed.

In chapter III.7.3 two important companies were determined for Kanggye. The “3<sup>rd</sup> April” General Factory (Kusong Machine Tool Factory) in Namsan-dong, Kusong-si (total area of 500.00 m<sup>2</sup>, and 5,800 employees) (Yonhap News 2001) is the second largest machine tool factory of North Korea, after the United Machine Tool Factories Huichon. Famous for the production of machine tools of the Kusong series, it was built in 1954 with Hungarian technical assistance in accordance with the 3-Year-Plan between 1954 and 1956 and with the prematurely fulfilled 5-Year-Plan between 1957 and 1960. The first part was finished in 1959 (annual production capacity of approximately 1,000 machines) and therefore advanced to the base of mechanical engineering in the DPRK. In the early days though mostly multifunctional, simple machines were produced, afterwards SV-18, MV-280 and FO-32 lathes and drill press were produced.<sup>35</sup>

The Kusong Textile Factory, in which cotton is produced, was founded in 1951. It is situated in Pangjik-dong. In 1978, a section for dyeing was set up and the factory was expanded with more sectors. With chemical fibres one can produce underwear, socks and other products (IPA 5 2003, 115).

The IPA counts four important factories—other than the above named, they are the Kusong Machine Factory, which is in production since 1985 and produces devices used in mining, and the Kusong Medicine Factory, which specialises itself in natural health supplements and tonics.

Additionally, the existence of armament factories in the north and south of Kusong is assumed.<sup>36</sup>

35 S. IPA-5 (2003, 115-116); KIET (1996, 246-248); KOFC (2010, 252-253).

36 “According to Im Young-sun, a defector from North Korea and former leader of guard platoon in the Military

The most important higher educational institutions of the city are dedicated to the schooling of technical young talents: Kusong Technical University, founded in 1960 and Kusong Machine College, founded in 1956 (IPA-5 2003, 116).

### **Transportation center in Phyongbuk**

Kusong is the transportation center in the heart of Phongbuk. The Phyongbuk railway line between Jongju and Chongsu (Sakju-kun) runs through the urban area. In Jongju the Phyongbuk line encounters the main line to Sinuiju and Pyongyang. It connects the sub centers of Panghyŏng (in the South) and Paekun (in the North) with the center of the city. The railway station Jongju is 41.2 km far from the railway station of Kusong. In the latter station the Phalwŏn line (Kusŏng – Phalwŏn, Nyongbyon-kun) goes off. Roadway connections are available to the *kun* in the proximity, for example Taekwan-kun, Jongju-si, Thaechon-kun, Chonma-kun, Sonchon-kun.

### **After the elevation to a city in 1967, there is no enlargement of the urban area**

Kusong-si emerged in 1967 from Kusong-kun. Kusong-up originated in 1952, and in 1954 two *rodongjagu* were founded (Chahŭng-rodongjagu in the North, Panghyŏn-rodongjagu in the South), and simultaneously the administrative seat of the county (*up*) was enlarged. Kusong-kun was slightly enlarged between 1952 and 1967 (once in 1961). After the city founding, there were no more enlargements.

### **1967, enlargement of central Kusong; 1976/1984: enlargement of the sub centers**

In 1967 the *up* was divided into ten *dong*. At the same time, six new *dong* were constructed from the *ri*, which are located on the fringe of the city center, and two from the North and four from the South of the city.

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Construction Bureau of the People's Armed Forces Ministry, North Korea has deployed missiles at a long-range missile base in Paekun-ri [Paegun], Kusong County, North Pyong-an Province, which was completed in 1986" (U.S. Government Printing Office 1997, 12). In Kusong. Paekun-dong exists, which developed from the division of AB Chahŭng, during the urbanisation of Kusong.

Furthermore, Wikimapia lists the „7th Machine Industry Bureau Aircraft Parts Factory,” located near the Phanghyŏn Airbase. “This facility is subordinate to the Second Economic Committee and is linked to the Panghyon Airbase. It was completed in 1986 to manufacture parts for MiG-15 and MiG-17. It also completed construction of MiG-29 aircraft from kits. It has primarily produced helicopters and modified the Air Force fleet for missile deliver and communications.”

The two *rodongjagu*, which were founded in 1954, remained after the city founding in 1967. In 1974 each *rodongjagu* was converted into a *dong*. Over time, the area was split in two, which occurred in a parallel manner: since 1976 the region of the former *rodongjagu* was divided into two *dong* each, since 1985 into four *dong* each. This suggests that central Kusong has strongly developed up until 1967, and after that the development of the two sub centers was driven forward.

In 1985 the surrounding area of Unyang-ri, which is located near the airbase,<sup>37</sup> was made into a *dong*.

### One center and two sub centers

The 25 *dong* of the city can be geographically divided into three groups:

1. the city center, including the industrial area in the middle
2. the Panghyŏn region in the South of the urban area (rice fields and military)
3. the Paekun healing water region in the North of the urban area



Figure Kusong-III. *Dong*

<sup>37</sup> Panghyŏn Airbase was completed in 1986 to manufacture parts for MiG-15 and MiG-17. It also completed construction of MiG-29 aircraft from kits. It has primarily produced helicopters and modified the Air Force fleet for missile deliver and communications.”

## Statistics

|           | <i>Dong-Formation</i> | <i>Dong-Splitting</i> |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1952 (1)  | <i>up</i>             | -                     |
| 1954 (3)  | 2 <i>rodongjagu</i>   | -                     |
| 1967 (18) | 6                     | (9)                   |
| 1976 (20) | -                     | 2                     |
| 1985 (25) | 1                     | 4                     |

### **Kusong – Traffic junction and location of machine construction in the mountainous country of Phyongbuk**

Kusong is located in the mountainous region of Phyongbuk on the right bank of Chŏnbang-gang, one of the tributary rivers of Taeryŏng-gang. The city became a traffic junction that is connected to Thaechon and Sakju. It was the collection space for agricultural products of the plains of the surroundings and has developed into a location of mechanical engineering after 1954. Of greater importance is the “3<sup>rd</sup> April” General Factory (Kusong Machine Tool Factory). Apart from that, Kusong has little industrial companies. In the South of the urban area, though, there is a military airport, near which armament factories are situated.

There is a clear division of development centers within Kusong, namely around the former *up* and the two former *rodongjagu*. After the city founding in 1967 new *dong* only emerged in the years of 1976 and 1985 and only within the regions of the two former *rodongjagu*.