

Rainer Dormels (2014)

Profiles of the cities of DPR Korea – Manpho

This work was supported by the Academy of Korean Studies (KSPS) Grant funded by the Korean Government (MOE) (AKS-2011-BAA-2105)

Find an introduction to the project at

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

This work has been published as a chapter in:

Rainer Dormels (2014): North Korea's Cities. Jimoondang. Seoul.

IV.2.3. Manpho

Settlement at the Korean – Chinese border

Manpho is located 5 km east of the Chinese city of Jian (226,583 inhabitants) and is connected with the latter by a railroad bridge (Yi Oh-hŭi 2011, 158-159). During the Joseon period, there was an important fortification that assured protection of the country in the North. Many ships that moved along the Yalu stopped here. It is assumed that the name of this city is derived from this background (Man: ten thousand, numerous; Pho: harbor).

In regards to its population, Manpho is the smallest among the 27 cities of the DPR Korea. Although the city has a large area by comparison, which is the reason why only Hoeryong shows a smaller number in terms of share of *dong* in relation to all administration units.

Table Manpho-I. Basic data¹⁶

Population	116,760 (Rank 27)
Area	672.379 km ² (Rank 11)
Population density	174 l./km ² (Rank 24)
Administrative units	12 <i>dong</i> /16 <i>ri</i> (43%) (Rank 26)
“Urban” population/“rural” population	70.8%/29.2% (Rank 22)

Situated on the Yalu, the area around Manpho was important in terms of the protection against attackers from the North. Hence, in the beginning of the Joson period a fortification made out of stone was built in Manpho and in 1416 a military camp, a *jin*, was established. Relating to the construction of the fortification, several pavilions such as the Segöm-Pavilion and the Mangmi-Pavilion were erected. The latter was restored in the second half of the 19th century and is thus still retained. Over 1,000 soldiers were based in Manpho-jin, as well as one interpreter for the communication with the Yurchen, who had command over their language. Manpho-jin was the starting point of one of the most important bonfire systems during the Joson period. Starting from Yödundae in Manpho, the signals were passed over to Uiju, Anju, Pyongyang and Kaesong towards Hansong (Seoul) (Corian Clio 2012).

Due to its characteristics as a border town, a customs office or border [frontier] guards was built during the Japanese occupation. Anti-Japanese brigades who operated in Manchuria attacked the city several times. In 1937 a railroad bridge was laid over the Yalu as part of the Japanese transport system, in order to command Manchuria. When Manpho became the terminal station of the Manpho line, the city changed into an important traffic junction. This railroad line was built since 1931 and completed in 1939. Mainly logs that arrived as rafts from the Wönchang-Jasong region at the headwater of Yalu were sawed here and transported to the consumption areas by train. Consequently, Manpho developed into an important collection point for wood (encykorea.aks.manphojin, n.d.).

During the Korean War, the route over Jian towards Manpho was one of four important roads over which the Chinese People’s Army crossed the border between PR China and DPR Korea.¹⁷

16 The IPA states 26 administrative units (11 *dong* and 15 *ri*), while the PSC-8 (2009, 464) claims 28 administrative units (12 *dong* and 16 *ri*). The *ri* that is mentioned in PSC but missing in IPA is Phosang-ri.

17 As for the other three routes, the Chinese troupes operated in Sinuiju, Sakju and Junggangjin (IMHC, n.d.).

Lowlands at the middle reaches of the Yalu

The city area developed in a NE-SW elongated direction and is situated at the middle reaches of the Yalu. It predominantly consists of low mountains and thus belongs to the lowest located regions of the Jagang Province. In the northeast and the east where mountains that emanate from the Kangnam mountain range and the Rangrim mountain range give natural protection to Manpho, the terrain is a little bit higher and in the western direction towards the Yalu it becomes gradually lower. In the northeast the Wölgi-bong (1,254 m) and in the east the Pömbawi-san (1,373 m) arise each as the highest peaks. At the riverside of the Yalu and the Kõnpho-gang, the Kosan-terrain and the Kõnha have formed, which belong to the three biggest of the Jagang Province. The deepest position of the city is located in the Namsang-ri (165 m). In the northeast and the southeast, karst landscapes have formed. As can be seen in Figure Manpho-II, the urbanized parts of the city are concentrated in the middle of the city area. Along the Kõnpho-chõn in the east of the city are many *ri*.

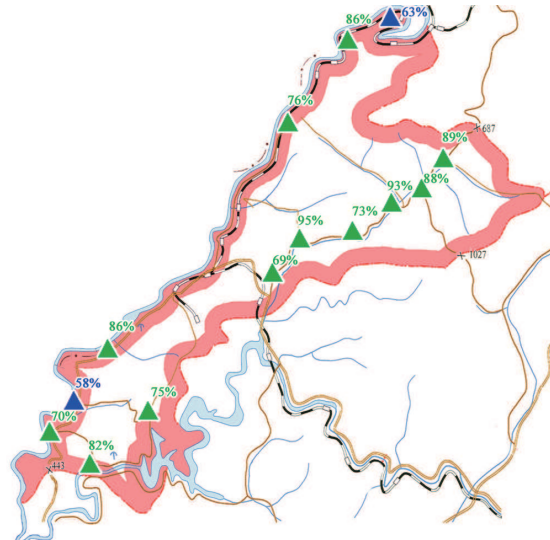


Figure Manpho-I. Forest area in the *ri*

Table Manpho-II. Climate values

Annual average	January temperature	August temperature	Precipitation
7.4°C (23)	-11.6°C (25)	22.5°C (20)	908.8 mm (15)

Hoar-frost falls starting in the beginning of October until the beginning of May (IPA-7 2003, 90).

About 7.5% of the city area is used agriculturally. From this percentage, 67% fall onto cereal (mainly corn and rice) and around 23% onto vegetables (i.e. Chinese cabbage, radish).

Silkworm cocoons are bred in the Manpho Silk Cocoon Farm, which then are sent to various silk factories (such as the Huichon Silk Factory) as basic material (IPA-7 2003, 92).

From a Sawing Site to a Tire—and Rubber—Manufacturer

In addition to the Manpho railroad line, the fact that many power plants such as the Unbong Power Plant (Jasang-kun) were located in the city and in its neighborhood was important for the development of the city's economy. In Manpho there are the power plants Jajanggang, Songhak, Songha, Tüggong 1 and Tüggong 2. On this basis, industrial companies that produce tires, textiles, machines, food, building materials, and chemical products have developed.

The North Korean KJY-24 (1990, 543) demonstrates the change of the economic structure of the city until the mid-80s.

Table Manpho-III. Proportion of value added of important industrial sectors in Manpho 1946–1986

	1946	1960	1965	1970	1980	1986
Energy industry	–	0,1	5,5	0,6	7,1	18,3
Machinery construction	–	2,5	15,3	5,1	5,5	8,9
Timber industry	100	74,1	15,6	9,5	3,3	1,2
Textile/Food/Basic commodity	–	19,7	50,1	21,2	18,8	22
Rubber	–	–	–	56,4	55,1	39,2

Source: KJY-24 (1990, 543).

At first, the forest industry dominated. Since the mid-50s, though, the light industry was developed. After the construction of the Aprokgang Tire Factory, which was completed at the end of the 60s, it dominated the economy of the city. Since the 80s the hydroelectric power plants of the city are of great importance. Consequentially, the relevance of the forest industry nosedived.

Hence, the Aprokgang Tire Factory is of major importance for the city. In the companies of mechanical engineering, construction machines used in forestry and agriculture, fine mechanical devices and basic commodities (sewing machines, children's bicycles) are produced. Also of high relevance are the Manpho Cement Factory, the Manpho Material Factory and the Manpho Chemical Factory.

Furthermore, there are numerous textile manufactories, factories of food industry, and factories producing daily goods, which are of local relevance.

Table Manpho-IV. Ranking (in parenthesis: number of companies or of cultural institutions)

Manpho	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	20 (9)	20 (11)	7 (25)	17 (8)	19 (22)	17
Companies-important	9 (4)	16 (1)	18 (4)		25 (4)	19 (4)
Cultural institutions			26 (0)			

Apart from the IPA source, Manpho is ranked in regards to the number of companies between rank 17 and 20, although it is the city with the lowest population in DPR Korea. However, there is no source that claims more than four important industrial companies for Manpho.

Table Manpho-V. Ranking (Total number of companies in relation to population)

Manpho	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies – total	2	7	1 – 4 – 26	4	3 – 23	1 – 8

Manpho shows a high number of industrial companies compared to its population. All sources indicate that Manpho ranks in terms of the ratio between companies and the ratio of population among the first six cities. In total, Manpho is in this ranking even at first place.

Table Manpho-VI. Specification (in parenthesis: number of companies)

Manpho	Light Industry	Heavy Industry	Mining	Energy
KOFC	21 (1)	10 (6)	–	1 (2)
MOU	12 (7)	17 (3)	–	2 (1)
IPA	15 (11)	17 (9)	–	3 (5)
KCNA	19 (2)	13 (3)	–	2 (3)
KIET	25 (6)	20 (10)	15 (1)	1 (5)

In three of the five sources Manpho seems to focus more heavily on heavy and chemical industry than on light industry. However, two sources indicate the other way around. Although the statistics do not give a consistent picture, there can be no doubt that given the relevance of the Aprozgang Tire Factory, the industry in Manpho is very much influenced by heavy industry. However, all five sources indicate the importance of the energy sector for the city.

In chapter III.7.3. four companies were identified as important: Aprozgang Tire Factory, Manpho Cement (8.2.) Factory, Manpho Chemical Factory, and Jajanggang Power Plant. Thus, we speak about three companies related to the heavy and chemical industry and one that is related to the energy sector.

At the Aprozgang Tire Factory¹⁸ in Pyŏlo-dong not only tires are produced but also other products made out of rubber. The factory was built from 1966 onwards and put into operation in 1968 under the name Chollima Tire Factory. It bears the current name since 1974¹⁹. It is the largest tire factory of DPR Korea. The fact that various facilities for employees such as a medical center, a cultural center and an academy belong to this factory, indicates this to be an important factory (IPA 7 2003, 93; KOFC 2010, 390-391).

The Manpho Cement Factory is located close to the Yalu in the northeastern part of the city (about 3 km away from the city center) and has a total area of 430.000 m². The construction of this factory started in 1978 within the context of the second Seven Year Plan (1978-1984) and ended in 1982. An expansion of the factory was completed in 1991. Parts of the technology and the equipment come from Romania. A branch terminal line of the Unbong-railroad line (between Manpho and Unbong) runs until the factory. The chalkstone that is processed here is produced in the 2 km distant north-eastern located Chagaphyŏng Mine. The coal is derived from the Mine 2.8. Youth (Phyongnam). The cement that is produced here is important for the construction of power plants nearby, but is also used in other parts of the country (KOFC 2010, 431-433).

The Manpho Chemical Factory is located in Pyŏlo-dong and its construction was completed in 1978. About 2.000 people are employed here. Basic chemistry products such as nitrogen, nitric acid, and sulfuric acid are produced in this factory (KOFC 2010, 372).

The Jajanggang Power Plant is situated in Yŏnha-ri at the Jajanggang lake. During the Japanese Occupation the construction work for the power plant started, however, it remained unfinished. In 1956, though, constructions resumed with Soviet help and the power plant is in operation since 1959. Together with the Suphung Power Plant and the Kanggye Youth Power Plant, it belongs to one energy network who powers all parts of the country (IPA-7 2003, 93; KOFC 2010, 146).

On 12th September, 2009, KCNA reported on a visit of Kim Jong-il at the Manpho Unhwa Factory in which manufacturing is based on the CNC system.

18 Aprozgang (often written as Amnokgang as well) is the Korean term for the Yalu.

19 In 1973 the Chollima Tire Factory in Nampho came into operation; this is how homonymy was prevented.

Rail junction at the northern border of DPR Korea

At the rail station “Youth” Manpho, which connects the city to China, the approximately 300 km long Manpho-railway line ends. It connects the city with the two other cities of the Jagang Province, the provincial capital, Kanggye, and Huichon as well as with the cities of the Phyongnam Province: Kaechon and Sunchon. The rail station “Youth” Manpho is on the one hand a notable station for passenger service, on the other hand coal, fertilizer, etc., which are used in the industries as well as in agriculture of the city Manpho, are transported to this station. Manpho is a little more than 50 km distant from the provincial capital Kanggye. This railway line was built during the Japanese Occupation, starting in 1931 and completed in 1939. The purpose of the construction of this line was the promotion of the wood industry since there had been large forest supplies in this area (Ko Thae-u 1992, 213). Until 1980 the line was electrified. Moreover, Manpho is connected with the neighboring province of Ryanggang through the 252 km long Hyesan-Manpho-“Youth”-line. It was released in 1988 for transportation.

The river port of Manpho is located in Kangan-dong, which connects Manpho over the Yalu with Wiwon and Unbong (IPA-7 2003, 92-93).

Manpho does not seem to have a central function in terms of culture. IPA does not indicate cultural institutions in this city. For the North Korean historiography of importance is the Kosanjin Revolutionary Site, where Kim Il-sung stayed during the Korean War (1950 - 1953) from 8th November to 18th December in 1950.

Since the city founding in 1967, there haven't been any new *dong* for about 40 years

Manpho was granted the status of a city (*si*) in October 1967. In January 1949, the Jagang Province was newly created and at that time Manpho was a *kun* of this province. Area changes arose as a result of enlargements or decreases at the expense or for the benefit of the neighboring Sijung-kun in the south. In 1952 Manpho-kun consisted of one up and 22 ri. In the same year Kŏnphyŏng-ri became Haebang-rodongjagu.

When Manpho was promoted to city in 1967, Manpho-up was divided

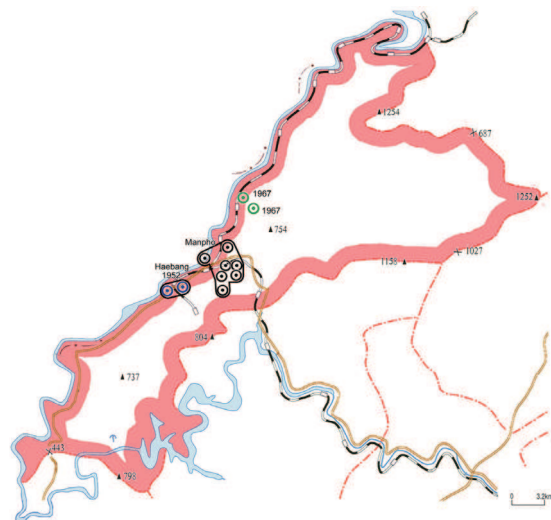


Figure Manpho-II. *Dong* in Manpho

into seven *dong* (Kogae-dong, Kunmak-dong, Kangan-dong, Segöm-dong, Saemmul-dong, Ponghwa-dong, Kwanmun-dong). From one part of Haebang-rodongjagu emerged Kuo-dong, the other part together with Pyölo-ri became Pyölo-dong. Munak-dong and Saemaül-dong was developed from Munak-ri. Sibridong-ri emerged from one part of Yönpheo-ri in the North of the city.

Thus, eleven of twelve *dong* of Manpho emerged already at the city-founding in October 1967. After that time IPA-7 (2003, 87) does not indicate any new developed *dong* and no enlargement of the municipal area. Only the PSC-8 (2009, 464) points out the existence of twelve *dong* without elaborating details.

Three urbanized regions of Manpho

The urbanized area of Manpho is distributed over three regions that are located at the banks of the Yalu:

- the former *up* in the center;
- the former Haebang-rodongjagu south-western of the center (the Aprokgang Tire Factory and the Manpho Chemical Factory are located here);
- the newly developed *dong* that developed from Munak-ri in 1967: Munak and Saemaül north-western of the center (the Manpho Cement Factory is located in this region)

Urbanized regions before the city founding (*up* and *rodongjagu*)

1942-1946, 1952-1967 Manpho-up

1952-1967 Haebang-rodongjagu (2)

	<i>Dong-Formation</i>	<i>Dong-Splitting</i>
1967 (11)	2	(7)

Manpho – Economic development area for agriculture, tourism and trade

Manpho, the city with the smallest population number among the 27 cities of the DPR Korea, has a very beneficial situation in regards to energy supply. The city has the largest tire factory of the DPR Korea, an important chemical factory and a notable cement factory. The tire factory and the chemical factory are located only a small distance south-west from the city center in the former Haebang-rodongjagu. The chemical factory is located approximately three km away north-west of the city center so that industries that bring

along the biggest environmental problems are erected a certain distance to the biggest residential zones. Development potential is offered through the closeness to China with which Manpho is connected through a railway bridge. The graves from the Koguryo period are important sights located on the Chinese banks of the Yalu. The number of tourists that enter DPR Korea from China via Jian and Manpho shows an upward trend since 2000. Already since 1988, Jian was announced as a special economic zone and this resulted in positive outcomes for the border trade. There are plans to establish a trade zone at the North Korean Yalu Island of Pyöldŭng-do (Yi Oh-hŭi 2011, 158-159). In 2013, Manpho was designated as one of 14 new locations for an economic development area, whereas the points of focus lie in the promotion of agriculture, tourism, and trade.