

Rainer Dormels (2014)

Profiles of the cities of DPR Korea – Sariwon

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IV.2.14. Sariwon

Traffic center in Hwangbuk

Sariwon is the capital of the Hwangbuk Province and is the area's administrative, economic and cultural center. It is one of the most densely populated cities of the DPR Korea. Only Songrim and Sinuiju have a higher population density.

Table Sariwon-I. Basic data

Population	307,764 (Rank 10)
Area	188 km ² (Rank 26)
Population density	1,637 l./km ² (Rank 3)
Administrative units	31 <i>dong</i> /9 <i>ri</i> (78%) (Rank 8)
"Urban" population/"rural" population	88.2%/11.8% (Rank 10)

In the beginning of the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) the important Jabi-pass, which was important for the North-South traffic in Korea was blocked⁵³ and instead the Tongsŏn-pass, which is located east of the Jŏngbang-san, was used, thus Sariwon fulfilled the function of an important traffic center and expanded. When the Kyongui railway line was commissioned in 1905 and in Sariwon the Haeju line and the Jangyŏn line branched off from it, the character of Sariwon as a traffic junction was further strengthened. When additionally to the good traffic conditions, the industry in Sariwon developed on the basis of the mining of the region, Sariwon constantly became more important and the seat of the district capital was moved from Pongsan to Sariwon in 1912. Sariwon kept enlarging, in 1929 Sawŏn-myon became Sariwon-myon, in 1939 it became Sariwon-up. At the end of the occupation period Sariwon-up had twelve *ri* and 25 *kun* and complied with more than 50,000 inhabitants the conditions to be appointed to a city. In 1947 Sariwon was separated from Pongsan-kun and appointed to a city (IPA-10 2003, 50). In the Korean War 95% of Sariwon was destroyed.

⁵³ In 1361 Red Turbans forced their way into the pass and blocked it. Since that time, especially the delegations of the Chinese Ming dynasty shunned it (Daum Encyclopedia Jabiryŏng).

Sariwon – endangered by drought

Sariwon developed in the western lowlands of North-Hwanghae on the lower reaches of the Jaeryöng-gang. In the northeast of the national territory, the western part of the Jöngban-san mountain range⁵⁴ extends with its elevations Jöngban-san (481 m), Palyang-san (440 m) and Kama-bong (481 m). Jöngbang-san, which consists of quartzites, and the other mountains in its environment surround the city of Sariwon in the North like a screen and contribute with their steep faces and odd rocks to the beauty of the city.

The city area decreases in height towards the South and eventually becomes a plateau. In the southwest of the city the Kyöngam-san (140 m) is located, in the southern periphery the Mia-san (150 m). 82.6% of the municipal area has a height of 100-300 m above sea level.⁵⁵



Figure Sariwon-I. Forest area in the ri

Table Sariwon-II. Climate values

Annual average	January temperature	August temperature	Precipitation
10.5°C (7)	-5.1°C (10)	24.3°C (3)	901.9 mm (16)

The weather around the time of May to June is very dry and in the past as in the present severe drought damages are not uncommon. The average annual rainfall of 901.9 mm falls more than 52% in summer. The Chöngbang-chön and Sangmae-chön rivers are often so dry, that the bare floor turns up except during the period between July to September (Chosun Ilbo February 12, 1996).

45% of the municipal area is cultivated land area, of which 40.5% is wet rice cultivation, 35.4% is dry farming and 21.5% is orchards. The most important crops are rice, corn, soybean, wheat, barley and foxtail millet. Also, there are specialized livestock farming like

⁵⁴ The South Korean geographer Kang Sök-o (1984) does not speak of a mountain range, but of the Jöngbangsan hilly land. According to the North Korean version, the Jöngbang mountain range is 60 km long, has a width of 6-8 km and has an average height of 420 m. To the highest mountains belong the Puindang-san (659 m), the Jönju-san (652 m), the Chönnö-bong (657 m), the Kami-bong (481 m) and the Jangbang-san (481 m) (IPA-10 2003, 38).

⁵⁵ Above 100 m are 6.3%, between 300 and 500 m 11.1%.

the Sariwon Chicken Farm (KCNA December 12, 2008) and a fish farm at the Kilsŏng port. 20.9% of the area of Sariwon is forest, of which 68.2% is pine, 14.6% is oak woods and 11% is acacia forest (IPA-10 2003, 53 and 56). A special product, which made Sariwon famous, are the grapes, which have been cultivated since the 1950's in the fruit tree groves in Torim-do. They are called "Victory-Grapes." Fruit tree groves pears and apples are also cultivated. Wine and jam preserves are manufactured as well (Chosun Ilbo February 12, 1996). The Migok Co-op farm is considered as a model farm, which has the goal "to assimilate the peasantry to the working class and industrialize agriculture rapidly" (KCNA July 6, 2009).⁵⁶ Kim Il-sung is said to have visited it 16 times and also Kim Jong-il was seen there often. There is a Revolution Museum and on holidays the museum is often visited by foreign diplomats.

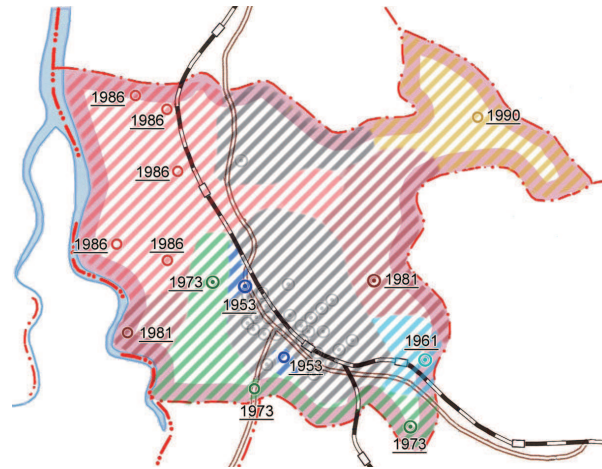


Figure Sariwon-II. Agricultural region in Sariwŏn and incorporated administrative units

Figure Sariwon-II shows, that Sariwon has been extended with agricultural areas in the course of time. Regions, which are close to the city and where vegetables are cultivated in (green marking), adjoin to the urbanized area (gray marking) in the west and in the south. In the West a rice plain extends towards the Jaeryŏng-gang (red marking). In the far Northeast is the mountainous forest region of Sŏngsan-ri (yellow marking) and in the Southeast are the fruit tree groves of Torim-dong (light-blue marking) located.

Sariwon is considered „Home of Magnolia“ (Chosun Ilbo February 12, 1996). The city has this attribute not only due to the fact, that one can see magnolia everywhere, not only at Kyŏngam-san, at Sangmae-san and at Chŏngbang-san, but also in parks, at playgrounds, on streets. This is associated with the story, that Kim Il-sung saw magnolias there on a school trip in 1924 for the first time. When he again visited Sariwon around 1964, he saw this flower again and decreed in 1991, that it should be made into the national flower of the DPRK. 50,000 flowers are planted annually in Sariwon and also sent

⁵⁶ KCNA (July 6, 2009) further explains: "The fields under cultivation have been standardized like a paduk (go) board and unique gravity-fed waterways and many dwelling houses have been constructed across the country to convert the countryside into a socialist fairyland good to live in." Another such model farms are the Sinam Co-op Farm in Ryongchon County, North Phyongan Province, the Chongsan Co-op Farm in Kangso District, Nampho and the Samjigang Co-op Farm in Jaeryong County, South Hwanghae Province and the Tongbong Co-op Farm in Hamju County, South Hamgyong Province. the Unhung Co-op Farm, Thaecheon County, North Phyongan Province (KCNA July 6, 2009; February 22, 2013).

to other regions (Chosun Ilbo February 12, 1996).

Center of the textile industry

Based on good traffic conditions in Sariwon, an industry already developed on a modest scale before 1945, starting with the textile industry. Furthermore there were farms, which are linked to agriculture (milling, breweries, manufacturing of agricultural equipment). After 1945, a modern industry was built up, which is related to the fact that the city as a provincial capital was built up into an administrative, economic and cultural center. Nowadays there are also companies for machine construction and metalworking, building materials, fertilizer and for the production of goods for the daily need (school supplies, cultural products, etc.).

Machine construction has a big meaning for the development of equipment for the agriculture (IPA-10 2003, 55-56). Concerning the share of the total output volume of the industry of the city of Sariwon, the textile industry comes by far in first place. This is followed by the food industry, machine construction and the manufacture of goods for the daily use.⁵⁷

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

Sariwon	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	10 (16)	9 (28)	17 (10)	12 (11)	13 (32)	13
Companies-important	26 (1)	10 (3)	21 (4)		9 (18)	6 (11)
Cultural institutions			9 (15)			

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

Sariwon	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	15	5	22-22-8	11	19-5	17-2

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

Sariwon	Light Industry	Heavy Industry	Mining	Energy
KOFC	12 (4)	5 (12)	-	-
MOU	10 (18)	14 (8)	12 (2)	-
IPA	7 (6)	14 (4)	-	-
KCNA	4 (9)	22 (2)	-	-
KIET	15(13)	9 (17)	11 (2)	-

⁵⁷ According to KJY-26 (1990, 426) there are four branches whose share of production between 1960 and 1984 achieved double-digit figures: (in parenthesis are the figures for 1984) the textile industry (43.3%), the food industry (15.8%), production of goods for the daily use (11%) and machine construction (15.8%).

Sariwon, according to its population is the tenth largest city in the DPR Korea. It is ranked, concerning the number of companies, slightly below the rank in terms of population. However, it looks slightly better in terms of the important companies. Although the light industry is considerably more represented than the heavy industry in Sariwon, the values in table Sariwon-V show that the industry in Sariwon is quite versatile.

In chapter III.7.3. eleven companies were identified as important: Sariwon Textile Factory, Sariwon Export Towel Factory, Sariwon Knitted Goods Factory, Sariwon Footwear Factory, Sariwon Cornstarch Factory, Sariwon Tobacco Factory, Sariwon Mining Machine Factory, Sariwon Tractor Accessory Factory, Sariwon Machine Factory, Sariwon Electric Appliances Factory, Sariwon Potassium Fertilizer Complex.

The total area of the Sariwon Textile Factory is 280,000 m², about 1,000 persons are employed there (KOFC 2010, 594). The operation started already before 1945 under the name Sariwon Silk Mill. It received the current name in September 1945 and started with the production of cloths. In 1970 a spinning was added and in 1974 a dye-works (IPA-10 2003, 57-58). In the Sariwon Export Towel Factory *inter alia* towel cloths, travel towels, sheets, bathrobes etc. for children and adults are produced. The articles produced there are exported as far as Japan and China (IPA-10 2003, 58). The Kyöngamsan Garment Export Factory manufactures padded clothes and jackets, which are exported to China, Canada, Germany, Switzerland and other countries (KCNA January 7, 2003). The Sariwon Cornstarch Factory is a company which produces *inter alia* corn noodles, potato flour, dextrose, cornstarch syrup, glucose, biscuits, spirits and oil. The potato flour and the cornstarch syrup, which are produced here, are also sent to other food factories in other cities for further processing (IPA-10 2003, 57). The Sariwon Tobacco Factory was built in 1969. From dried tobacco leaves cigarettes are produced, which are sold throughout the country (IPA-10 2003, 57).

The Sariwon Potassium Fertilizer Complex is actually located outside the municipal border of Sariwon in the nearby Pongsan-kun (Chosun Ilbo February 12, 1996).⁵⁸ The construction of this factory started in September 1986 with Soviet help, in order to liberate the DPR Korea from the import dependency of potash fertilizer, and it was supposed to be completed in 1990. It was a core project of the 3rd Seven-Year-Plan (1987-1993), but it could not be fulfilled, so that a puffer plan (1994-1996) was inserted. It was planned to produce potash fertilizer in this factory from potash feldspar, which was stored in large quantities in Chöngdan-kun (Hwangnam), at a rate of 510,000t/year (Chosun Ilbo February 12, 1996). The plant was built by military units and can be seen with its two high chimneys from the highway between Pyongyang and Kaesong. After Moscow has pulled itself out of the project, the project stagnated (Quinones 2002, 13) and was probably abandoned later.

58 Probably in Masan-ri, in the Chosun Ilbo there is talk of Madong-ri. In Pongsan-kun however there is no administrative unit Madong-ri. Madong is the name of a village within Masan-ri (IPA-10 2003, 263)

Junction for the rail, road and water traffic – “City on the canal”

Sariwon is a traffic junction, which connects Pyongyang, Kaesong, Haeju, the coast of the West Sea and the inland mountain region. In Sariwon the Korean main railroad line, which runs from Pusan to Sinuiju and the Haeju-Youth-Line fork. Sariwon has three stations Sariwon Youth, Sariwon East and Jǒngbang. It is reported, that at the station Sariwon Youth also intercity buses to Pyongyang are waiting for passengers.

The municipal area is crossed by a highway between Pyongyang and Kaesong. Through the city center leads a state road of the first category to Haeju, which is 75 km away. By car, Sariwon can be reached from Pyongyang in 45 minutes.

Through the Kilsǒng port, Sariwon is connected over the Jaeryǒng-gang and the Taedong-gang with the Songrim port and the region of Pyongyang as well as with the Nampho port.

In February 1954, a canal was built to the city center, which made the water of the Jaeryǒnggang flow to the city center, and on the foothills of the Kyǒngam-san two big lakes were created, which are connected with the canal subterranean. After the construction of the West Sea Barrage in Nampho (1981-1986), the water level of the Taedong-gang, into which the Jaeryǒng-gang flows, increased, the Kilsǒng quay, which is located 4 km west of the city center in Taesǒng-dong, was extended in 1988 for passengers and for cargo and thus the shipping routes to Songrim, Nampho, Pyongyang opened. On this waterway industrial products from Pyongyang and Nampho and agricultural products from the Hwanghae provinces are transported (Chosun Ilbo February 12, 1996).

Provincial center for education, culture and health care

Sariwon has ten universities and colleges. The most well-known are the Agricultural College “Kye Ŭngsang,”⁵⁹ the University of Medicine “Kang Kǒn,”⁶⁰ the Geology University Sariwon, the Koryo Medicine University Sariwon as well as the three pedagogical colleges. A major research facility is the Institute of Cattle Owning. Sariwon also has institutions, which are typical for a provincial capital like a library, an arts center, a mask theater, a cinema, a sports field, a museum of history and a radio station. Also, the Art Ensemble of the province North-Hwanghae has its seat in Sariwon. There are ten hospitals and other medical institutions like the People’s Hospital of the province North-Hwanghae. In Sariwon is also one of three prisons, of whose existence a delegation of Amnesty International was officially

59 It was founded in 1959 as Agricultural University Sariwon and in 1990 named after the geneticist Kye Ŭngsang.

60 It was founded in 1971 as Medical University and was named in 1990 after the general chief of staff, who died in the Korean War.

informed in April/May 1995.

Tourism areas: Jǒngbang-san and Kyǒngam – “Folk Custom Street”

The area on the foothills of the Kyǒngnam-san was a popular recreation area for Koreans in the past and lately was extended as a touristic destination for foreigners. The canal itself is suitable for boat games and strolls. Of outstanding landscape are the Kyǒngnam lakes, which are connected through a subterranean waterway with the canal and the Kyǒngnam pavilion, which dates back to the 15th century. In addition to Kyǒngnam-san, spring water, a fairground, a zoo and an artificial waterfall are named as popular destinations of Korean tourists (Chosun Ilbo February 12, 1996). Opened for foreign tourists is the newly designed “Folk Custom Street” on Kyǒngam-san and its foothill. Pavilions, houses in traditional Korean style, the Kyǒngamsan hotel, restaurants and exhibit goods related to Korean culture and history were put up there (KCNA November 24, 2005).

A special tourist attraction within the municipal borders of Sariwon offers the Jǒngbang-san in the north of the city with its mountain fortress made of stone. The mountain fortress of Jǒngbang was built in the Koryo period, it forms a circle with a wall length of 12 km and is 5-6 m, in some parts up to 10 m high. It was part of the fortification for the city Pyongyang, which is situated 48 km north. A sight is the southern gate off the fortress. The amusement park Jǒngbang is 1 km away from this gate. Within the mountain fortress is the famous Sǒngbul temple, which was built in 898. It was often visited by school classes on class outings. According to the Chosun Ilbo, approximately in 1988, a summer residence of Kim Il-sung was set up, at the entrance of the mountain fortress Jǒngbang guards were positioned and one could only walk until the playground (amusement park) (Chosun Ilbo February 12, 1996).

Newcomers with a “good reputation”

Since Sariwon has about 300,000 inhabitants, the ratio of locals and people from other regions is 6 to 4. Because a lot of residents of Sariwon have left to the South after the Korean War, a considerable number of remaining inhabitants were driven out to northern regions and instead people from the Hamgyong and Phyongan provinces with a “good reputation” were settled here. Thus, newcomers often have better opportunities to hold a public office. However, collisions between newcomers and locals have not often been reported. The cause is said to be the gentle disposition of the people from the Hwanghae provinces (Chosun Ilbo 12, 1996).

A statue for Kang Kŏn

In honour of the general chief of staff Kang Kŏn (1918-1950), who died during the Korean War, a statue was erected in Sariwon on the 20th anniversary of the Korean Workers' Party in 1968. Also a street, named after him, was built. At the Kangkŏn street the Sariwŏn Hotel, the Sariwon Department Store, the „Kang Kŏn“ Medical University and the „Kang Kŏn“ University Hospital are located.

International associations

There are a number of foreign relief organizations, which were active in Sariwon or still are. The activities are often related to the children's hospital of Sariwon and the orphanage of Sariwon.⁶¹

In addition to the foreign relief organizations and tourists, who visit the Jŏngbang-san or the tourism streets around the Kyŏngam-san, Sariwon has contact with other countries through the twin towns of Székesfehérvár (Hungary) and Lahore (Pakistan) as well as the Agricultural Cooperative Jŏngbang, which has the name affix "DPRK-Mongolian Friendship" and is regularly visited by members of the Mongolian embassy. Foreign diplomats are lead to the agricultural cooperative Migok, an example cooperative of the country.

"Residential buildings higher than the buildings of the administration"

In Puk4-dong ten 24-storey high rise residential blocks catch one's eye. These might be related with the "Order on the Spot" by Kim Il-sung. Since the elevators do not work, one has to go up to the 24th storey and the coal for the heating will be pulled up with a roller (Chosun Ilbo 12, 1996). In North Korean propaganda, Kim Il-sung is praised because in March 1970 he ordered the construction of high rise residential blocks for workers in Sariwon, which are higher than the buildings of the organs of power.

Administrative, economic and cultural center of the province North-Hwanghae City since 1947, since then incorporations (six times)

In 1947 Sariwon was detached from Pongsan-kun and became a city (*si*). It consisted of twelve *ri*. In December 1952 the *ri* were regrouped and Sinchang-ri was initially added to

61 Among the relief organizations that were active in Sariwon are ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) and HBAid (Hungarian Baptist Aid).

Pongsan-kun. After that, the municipal area was expanded five times at the expense of Pongsan-kun (1953, 1961, 1973, 1981, 1986) and once at the expense of Yonthan-kun:

In December 1953, Kyōngam-ri (from parts of Pongsan-kun) and Sangha-ri (from parts of Pongsan-kun and Unpha-kun) were expanded. Kwangsōng-ri and Kuryong-ri were created from other parts, which are incorporated from the Pongsan-kun.

In 1961 parts of Sōngsan-ri and parts of Torim-ri (both Pongsan-kun) form the new Torim-ri, which got incorporated into Sariwon.

In March 1973 two *ri* (Migok-ri and Mangŭm-ri) and the Ōsu-rodongjagu from the Pongsan-kun are added. In 1981, with Sinchang-ri and Haesō-ri, two more *ri* from the Pongsan-kun are added, in October 1986 with Taeryong-ri, Munhyōn-ri, Pongŭi-ri, Sōnjōng-ri and Jōngbang-ri five more.

In December 1990 Sōngsan-ri from Yonthan-kun is added to Sariwon-kun.

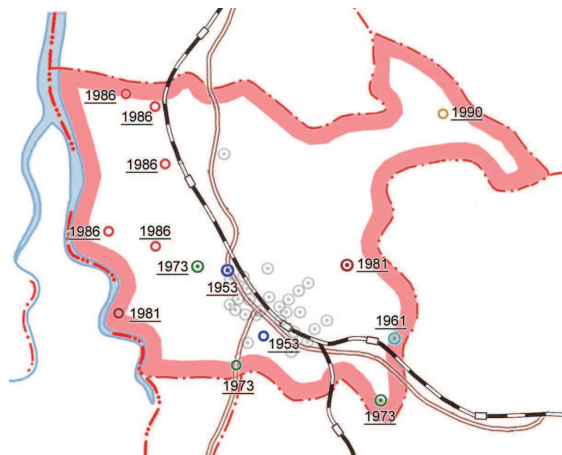


Figure Sariwon-III. Incorporations

Common administrative regrouping in the second half of the 50s

In 1955 twelve *dong* were made from five *ri*. All are situated in the city center of Sariwon. Apart from that the Ōsu-rodongjagu, which already became a *rodongjagu* in 1953 and a *dong* in 1974, is located in the present municipal area of Sariwon since 1973.

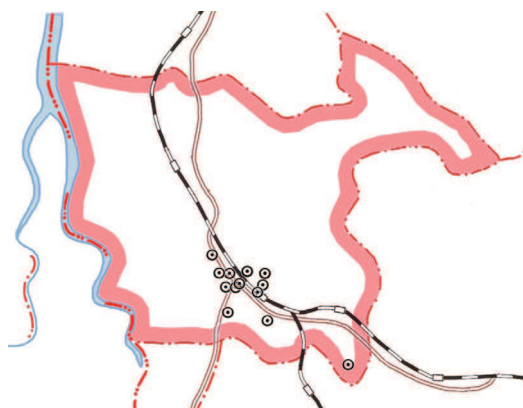


Figure Sariwon-IV. 1955 13 dong



Figure Sariwon-V. New dong 1961 and 1965

In 1956 there were further re-groupings, which led to the divisions of the centrally situated Sangmae-ri into Ogang-ri, Chölsan-dong and Sangmae-dong. Due to further regroupings in June 1957 the number of *dong* within Sariwon was reduced through mergings to eleven. In February 1959 Sinyang-ri, which is situated on the southern outskirts of Central-Sariwon, became a *dong*.

The map of Sariwon-IV shows the location of the twelve *dong* of Sariwon-si from 1955 and Ösu-dong. The current municipal borders are shown, so that the Ösu-rodongjagu in the East appears within the municipal borders.

The 60s: Enhancement of the city center

In March 1961 Kyöngam-dong, which is situated on the southern outskirts of Central-Sariwon, became a *ri* again. At the same time six new *dong* were created, three by the separation from already existing *dong*, whilst three *ri* were formed to *dong*. These new *dong* indicate a growth of the city center to the Southeast, Southwest and to the North.

In January 1965 there were again regroupings, five new *dong* were added. Two of them are situated in the center of the city, further three indicate an expansion of the city center towards Southeast.

1981 and 1991: new *dong* also offside the municipal area

In the 70's no new *dong* were created. Then, in 1981 three *ri* become *dong*, Kyöngam-ri, which was already a *dong* between 1955 and 1961; Kwangsöng-ri, which is located on the northwest rim of Central-Sariwon and which was incorporated in 1953, and Torim-ri in the Southeast of the municipal area, a part of the city of Sariwon since 1961.

In 1991 five new *dong* were created in the North of the city.

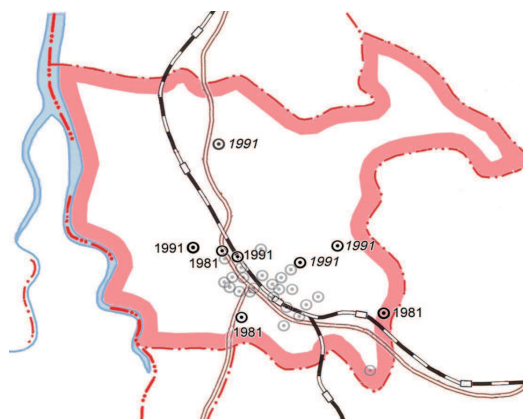


Figure Sariwon-VI. New *dong* 1981 and 1991

Structure of the city of Sariwon

Due to the distribution of the *dong*, three regions with an urbanised character within the city Sariwon can be identified:

1. The center with the administrative functions of the city as a provincial capital and important factories like the textile factory in the southeast of the municipal area
2. The Jōngbang area with the Sōngbul temple and the research institute for cattle owning in Sōngmun-dong (in the North of the municipal area)
3. East-Sariwon with Torim-dong and Ōsu-dong. In Torim-dong there is an orchard and a grain processing factory. From 1953 until 1974 Ōsu-dong was *rodongjagu*.

All three centers developed around the railways stations of the city.

KJY-26 (1990, 426) mentions four large industry regions for the city of Sariwon, of which three are situated within the center. These three regions are (in parenthesis the region's share of the total number of industrial employees of Sariwon in 1983):

- the Sanōp region in the East: (56.8%)⁶²,
- the Taesōng region in the West (19.2%)⁶³ and
- the Wonju-Chōlsan region in the North (1.9%).

The fourth region, mentioned in KJY-26 (1990, 426), is the Torim-Ōsu region on the southeast border of the city (7.8%), other regions (14.2%)

The northeast of the municipal area is occupied by the Jōngbang mountain range, in the west of the city center are rural areas with dry farming for the urban vegetable supply, and further in the West are large areas of wet rice cultivation.

Statistics

In 2002 Sariwon consisted of 31 *dong* and nine *ri*.

	<i>Dong-Formation</i>	<i>Dong-Splitting</i>
1955 (13)	13	-
1956 (15)	2	-

⁶² Here are *inter alia* the Sariwon Textile Factory, the Sariwon Tractor Accessory Factory and the Sariwon Knitted Goods Factory.

⁶³ Here are *inter alia* the Kyōngamsan Ūnha Garment Factory.

1957 (12)	-	-3
1959 (13)	1	-
1961 (18)	-1/3	3
1965 (23)	-	5
1981 (26)	3	-
1991 (31)	3	2

Sariwon – city on the way between Pyongyang and Seoul

Sariwon is conveniently situated for public transport between Pyongyang and Kaesong. It is a provincial capital and a rural industrial town concentrating on textile industry. In several stages, in particular in 1986, agricultural areas were incorporated into the municipal area. Nevertheless, Sariwon is one of the cities with a high proportion of urban population and is one of the most densely populated cities of the DPR Korea. In North Korean geographical descriptions, Sariwon has been called a satellite town of Pyongyang.

Due to its location between the capitals of the two Koreas in the case of a reunification Sariwon has quite good development potential.