

Rainer Dormels (2014)

Profiles of the cities of DPR Korea – Sinpho

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IV.2.25. Sinpho

Most famous fishing harbor of North Korea

Sinpho has been known as a fishing port since ancient times. In October 1960 Sinpho-si was founded from a part of Sinpho-kun. In 1994 Sinpho came to public notice due to the “Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.” Due to the agreement two 1000 MW light water reactors (LWR) power plants were to be built in the north-eastern part of Sinpho. In 2003 however, the project was cancelled. In this context, Kŭmho-jigu was outsourced from a part of Sinpho from the municipal area in September 1995.¹⁰³ The remaining part of the city is marked by fishing, fish processing and ship building.

Sinpho is a city with few inhabitants, and has a small area and a minor proportion of rural inhabitants.

Table Sinpho-I. Basic data

Population	152,759 (Rank 24)
Area	218 km ² (Rank 23)
Population density	701 l./km ² (Rank 12)
Administrative units	16 <i>dong</i> /6 <i>ri</i> (73%) (Rank 11)
“Urban” population/“rural” population	85.7%/14.3% (Rank 11)

The topographic structure of this city is very simple. The biggest part of the municipal area is occupied by a plain, which does not exceed the height of 100 m above sea level. When moving from the coast towards North and West, the terrain gradually increases. In the western border area of the city runs the Kōdubong mountain range with the Jong-san (703 m), the highest mountain of the city in the Northwest. Here, the East Sea coast is relatively moved. The Yanghwa bay as well as the Sondo cape have formed here. The Sinpho port is protected by the Mayang island, which has a size of 8 km² and lies in front of the port (IPA-12 2003, 257-258).

Table Sinpho-II. Climate values

Annual average	January temperature	August temperature	Precipitation
9.7°C (11)	-3.2°C (3)	22.4°C (21)	737 mm (22)

Due to maritime influence, the winter is mild and the summer is cool.

¹⁰³ More to Sinpho Nuclear Power Plant see Lee, Jeong-sik (2000, 500-502).



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

The forest covers about 60% of the area and consists partly of pine trees or oaks.

This region was always known as a fishing grounds. Because of the rich fishing grounds numerous fisherman families lived for a long time especially in Sinpho bay and Yanghwa bay. Agriculture has developed on the banks of the Tongdae-chŏn, which flows at Phungŏ-dong in the West of the city into the East Sea (IPA-12 2003, 258-259).

As specialised crop, there is a mushroom farm in the city (KCNA June 12, 2007).

Sinpho area – a basis for the fishing industry

In Sinpho city there are not only the Sinpho Fishery Station and the Yanghwa Fishery Station as well as fishermen’s cooperatives, culture farms and fishing sub-workteams, but also numerous fishery companies, which operate from various smaller and larger ports. The Sinpho Fishery Station is the biggest fishing base of the DPR Korea. At the end of the 19th century, a fishing village arose there and in 1936 first a fishery, where thousands of fishermen worked, was set up among the Japanese in order to exploit the Korean sea resources. After 1945 the business was further expanded. It also has a fish processing facility, which produces a wide product range (IPA-12 2003, 260-261). The Yanghwa Fishery Station was initially formed in 1947 as operational unit of a precursor of the Sinpho Fishery Station and is since 1952 an independent company. It is one of the largest of its kind of the DPR Korea. From 1968 docks were built, which enable bigger ships for deep-sea-fishing to land (IPA-12 2003, 261). Another Fishery Station is situated in Ryukdae1-dong (IPA-12 2003, 259 and 266). In Sinpho especially high sea fishery is carried out, since the “sea off Sinpho is Korea’s leading Pollack fishing ground” (KCNA March 24, 1998). Fishing in Sinpho is possible throughout the year. Important products of the fish processing industry are “frozen fish, pickled fish, fish-powder and salted fish eggs” (KCNA March 24, 1998). Of major importance for the fish processing is the Sinpho Canned Fish Factory, which was built in 1953. From mackerel, trout, Yellowtail or flounders etc from the East Sea a huge variety of goods are produced. Also, in the bays of the city are breeding ponds, especially for seaweed and kelp (IPA-12 2003, 259-260). Furthermore in Sinpho there are a number of research institutes and educational establishments, which focus on the fishery industry. The Fishery Machine Research Institute explores methods for the mechanization of production in the area of the fishery industry. In 1969 it was officially opened. The Aquatic Products Processing Institute

was originally a subdivision of the Tonghae (East Sea) Fishery Institute (founded in 1946), which is resident in Wonsan (s. KCNA July 14, 2008) and became independent in 1968. The Sinpho University of Fisheries was founded in 1979 and trains particularly employees of the fisheries undertakings, which are located in Sinpho, in fishery-specific technologies. The port Sinpho was expanded as fishing port as well as commercial port and is of regional significance.

Fish processing and shipbuilding

Fishing and the processing of fish, the construction and the repair of ships as well as the production of fishing equipment are the main industrial sectors of the city. In addition to that there are factories of local relevance, which produce food, goods for the daily need, medicine, chemical products, clothes, paper and building materials, in which the food processing is of particular importance. Besides seafood, also fruits and vegetables are processed (IPA-12 2003, 259).

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

Sinpho	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	22 (7)	27 (3)	27 (2)	27 (1)	26 (13)	26
Companies-important	16 (2)	24 (0)	26 (1)		27 (2)	27 (1)
Cultural institutions			14 (6)			

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

Sinpho	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	17	27	27-26-10	27	25-27	27-26

In most of the sources Sinpho has a lower rank in industrial companies than in terms of population (rank 24).

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

Sinpho	Light Industry	Heavy Industry	Mining	Energy
KOFC	2 (4)	22 (3)	-	-
MOU	24 (1)	1 (2)	-	-
IPA	1 (2)	-	-	-
KCNA	1 (1)	-	-	-
KIET	1 (9)	26 (3)	8 (1)	-

Due to the low number of important companies in Sinpho, the fish processing companies and shipyards are very significant. Both define the city, so that there is no talk of an orientation to light or heavy industry and the sources depending on the orientation contradict. The naval repair yards of Sinpho are not mentioned especially in the North Korean sources.

In chapter III.7.3. only the Sinpho Canned Fish Factory was ascertained as an important company.

Sinpho – DPR Korea's Submarine Production Base

Sinpho has an important role not just for fishing, but also for shipbuilding, in particular the construction of submarines. The statements are however inconsistent regarding in which factories submarines are actually produced. On the one hand the Sinpho Shipyard is mentioned. It is located in Ryōnho-dong and is said to be specialized in fishing boats as well as navy ships. Approximately 1,500 workers are employed there. From 1980 *inter alia* submarines, small undersea vehicles, air-cushion vehicles are produced there (An Yun-sōk 2011). Also the Mayang-do Shipyard is considered a production site of submarines. The Mayang-do Naval Base on the north side of the island “provides operation and logistical support for submarines, antisubmarine craft, and patrol craft” (GlobalSecurity.com n.d.). On the other hand there are reports, according to which in Sinpho solely the Pongdae Boiler Factory, which is located in Ryukdae2-dong, produces submarines. The name of course is a cover. Its former name was Ryukdae-ri Shipyard. The annual production capacity is said to be four to five submarines per year. When on 26th March 2010 the Chōnan, a Republic of Korea Navy warship, was sunk in the Yellow Sea, with 46 seamen being killed, there was speculation that the warship had been sunk by a North Korean torpedo fired by a midget submarine, which is said to have been produced in the Pongdae Boiler Factory (Ju Yong-jung/Yi Yong-su 2010).

City with numerous cultural institutions

Relatively high is the number of cultural institutions in Sinpho. In addition to numerous research and educational establishments relating to the fishing, especially the Kim Hyong Kwon University of Education is noteworthy. It is the college, where the teachers for the higher classes are trained in schools of the Hamnam Province. This college was founded in Hamhung in 1961, resettled in 1965 to the Sinhung-kun and in 1967 to Sinpho. In 1990, the name Hamnam University of Education Nr. 1 was changed to Kim Hyong Kwon University of Education, in memory of the anti-Japanese fighter Kim Hyong-kwon (1905-

1936), an uncle of Kim Il-sung¹⁰⁴ (IPA-12 2003, 261).

Structural Analysis

In October of 1960, the city Sinpho was founded from a part of Sinpho-kun. In January of 1974, eight *ri* of the Sinchang-kun were added to Sinpho-si, which then formed the Kūmho-jigu in September 1995. In the same year, a further *ri* was added from Sinpho-si (Honam-ri) to Kūmho-jigu.

Rodongjagu that existed before Sinpho became a city

In 1952 three *rodongjagu* were founded: Ryuktae, Tongho and Mayang. In 1953 Mayang-rodongjagu again became a *ri* and Ryōnho became a *rodongjagu*.

At the founding of the city in 1960, the *up* was split up in four *dong* (Haeam, Ōhang, Pohang, Haesan), Ryōnho-rodongjagu in two (Ryōnho-dong and Kwangbok-dong) and Sinhūng-dong was formed from parts of the *up* and Ryōnho-rodongjagu. The former *rodongjagu* Ryuktae and Tongho became *dong*, and Ryōngmu-dong (in 1977 renamed Phungō-dong) was newly created.

After becoming a city, in 1971 a *rodongjagu* again was founded (Mayang), which was transformed to a *dong* in 1974. Haeam-dong and Ryuktae-dong were split up in 1967, Kwangbok-dong and Tongho-dong in 1991. Yangji-dong was created in the same year by the splitting of Ryuktae1-dong.

The *rodongjagu* are located on the coast or on an island and seem to be for the most part associated with the fishing and the shipbuilding.

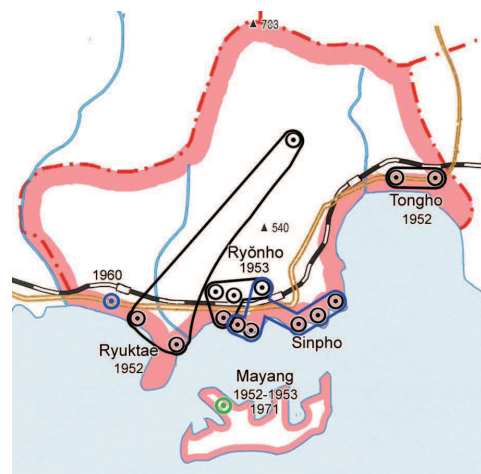


Figure Sinpho-II. Dong and the former rodongjagu

104 In the same year, also the Phungsan-kun (Ryanggang-do) was renamed Kimhongwon-kun.

Structure

The center is the old *up* (Sinpho) and the former Ryŏnho-rodongjagu in the West. Further West and in the downtown is the area of the former Ryuktae-rodongjagu, whereas the former Tongho-rodongjagu is located on the eastern border of the city. The Mayang island was a *rodongjagu* between 1952 and 1953 and from 1971 until 1974 and is since that time a *dong*.

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

1952-1960 Sinpho-up

1952-1960 Ruktae-rodongjagu

1952-1960 Tongho-rodongjagu

1952-1953 Mayang-rodongjagu

1953-1960 Ryŏnho-rodongjagu

Statistics

	<i>Dong-Formation</i>	<i>Dong-Splitting</i>
1960 (10)	1	(5)
1967 (12)	-	2
1971 (13)	1	-
1991 (16)	-	3

Sinpho – small town on the East Sea coast

Sinpho is an important fishing port on the East Sea coast. Moreover, there probably are submarine shipyards, which are however not mentioned in the North Korean press as well as in the depiction of the industry of North Korea and thus are not included in the statistics. In 1991 three new *dong* are created, but they are not adjoining the area, so that there can be no talk of a certain growth pole. The Kŭmho-jigu, famous for the initially planned assembling of light water reactors, was originally part of Sinpho-si, but has been separated from it.