

**Rainer Dormels (2014)**

**Profiles of the cities of DPR Korea – Sinuiju**

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## IV.2.4. Sinuiju

### The “New Uiju”

Sinuiju is the largest border town of the DPR Korea to China. It is the most important location to enter North Korea through ground transportation. Due to Sinuiju’s position, the city would have had a high potential for special economic areas. However, the physical-geographical circumstances narrow the potential down.

Sinuiju is the capital of the province of Phyongbuk and, according to the number of inhabitants, one of the largest cities of the DPR Korea, though, according to the area size, one of the smallest. Only Songrim is more densely populated than Sinuiju. Therefore it comes as no surprise, that there is hardly any space for economic areas in Sinuiju.

**Table Sinuiju-I.** Basic data

Population	359,341 (Rank 6)
Area	190 km <sup>2</sup> (Rank 25)
Population density	1,891 l./km <sup>2</sup> (Rank 2)
Administrative units	50 <i>dong/9 ri</i> (85%) (Rank 4)
“Urban” population / “rural” population	93%/7% (Rank 2)

Sinuiju is situated about 40 km above the mouth of the Yalu, approximately in the northwest of the province, directly near the Chinese border. Sinuiju originated in connection to the construction of a railway line due to Japanese authorities, which should have crossed from the Southeast to the northwest of Korea. The construction of this

railroad was related to the Russo-Japanese War (1904 - 1904). The railroad contained the route between Seoul, the capital, and Pusan, the south-eastern seaport city, the Kyongbu-line; and the Kyongui-line, which should have connected the capital with Uiju in the northwest. It was planned to connect this route to the Manchurian railroad network by means of the construction of a railroad bridge above the Yalu.

In 1904 the Provisional Military Railroad Authority was established by the Japanese government and within the framework of the metalling, the construction of the north-western part of the rail from Kwaksan to Uiju (235 km) commenced. The most complex problem was the matter of the location of the bridge, which was to be constructed above the Yalu.

A potential position was located near a river crossing close to the settlement of Uiju, where a river isle was located. This region was also used by delegations of the Korean Joseon empire as well as by the Chinese Ch'ing empire, who had crossed the Yalu. Another proposal suggested building the bridge over the Yalu about 20 km downstream, where it would push against the Manchurian side upon the county of Antung (today: Dandong). In April 1905 it was decided to implement the latter proposal. The background of this decision was the co-occurring construction of the route from Antung to Mukden (today: Shenyang). On the flooded wetlands of the Yalu, beneath the hills of Chukmyŏn-san, where the Korean ground was reached by the 947 m long bridge, a new city was systematically built. This city was called Sinuiju—"the New Uiju."

When the bridge over the Yalu was finished in 1911, the connection to the Manchurian railway was accomplished, which was the reason of an enormous development process in Sinuiju as well as in Antung. Sinuiju is an important junction, not only for ground transportation. It also developed as a point of departure for maritime traffic on the headwaters of the Yalu. 1923 the capital of Phyongbuk Province was relocated from Uiju to Sinuiju, through which the city became not only the politic, but also the economic center of north-western Korea (Yun Jŏng-sŏp 1987, 128-130).

However, a major harbour could not be developed in Sinuiju. Since the Yalu is frozen during winter, the harbour of Sinuiju is restricted to being open for only half a year. In addition, the tides are big and the accumulation of earth and sand is very strong. The water depth is irregular, since the flow center of the Yalu tilts itself towards the Chinese waterside. When the harbour was opened in 1900, ships of the 1,000 t-class were able to dock, afterwards ships of the 500 t class were able to come in and out. Therefore, the demand for a replacement harbour rose, which was the reason for building the Tasado harbour (Ryongchon-kun) (Kang Sŏk-o 1984, 307-308).

Theoretically Sinuiju is connected with European rail network due to the railway bridge, which can also be used by motor vehicles. The belligerent conflicts during the Korean War have prevented this connection, though. The international traffic to Beijing was only possible from 1954, and from 1964 it was made possible with electric

locomotives.

China, amongst others, was instrumental with the setup of the city of Sinuiju after the Korean War. Until 1958 Chinese troops were stationed in Sinuiju, who had built about 100,000 apartments in the city center, while Bulgaria built a hospital in Sinuiju (Jang Se-hun 2006b, 470).

### City in flood-prone position

Sinuiju is located only a few meters above sea level. In the South and Southeast of the city, the terrain is a bit higher, though. The municipal area consists of an alluvial plain in the lower reaches of the Yalu, of hills from the East and the South, and of islands in the North.

Sinuiju was built in the midst of meadows and swamps during the Japanese occupation. Since the built-up area lies deeper than the Yalu, it was surrounded by an approximately 3 m high dike at this time. Therefore, Sinuiju is highly prone to flood.

96.7% of the city area consists of elevations at an altitude of 100 m, 3% at an altitude between 100 m-200 m and only 0.3% rises above sea level of 200 m (IPA-5 2003, 73).

Important rivers of this city are the Yalu (Aprok-gang, Amnok-gang), which constitutes the border to China, the Samgyo-chŏn, which forms the boundary to Ryongchon-kun and the Yŏha-chŏn, which is a subsidiary stream of the Samgyo-chŏn.



Figure Sinuiju-I. Agricultural land in the ri

Table Sinuiju-II. Climate values

Annual average	January temperature	August temperature	Precipitation
9.6°C (14)	-6.8°C (17)	24.0°C (7)	1,001.5 mm (13)

The climate is continental; however it is subject to maritime influence.

The forest accounts for 8% of the city area, wherein pine is strongly represented. Agricultural field cultivation area (vegetables, grains and fruit) makes up 55% of the

city, of which more than 30% are located on the banks of the Yalu and the Samgyo-chŏn. The animal husbandry, especially chicken farms and pig farms in Sŏnsang-dong as well as the duck farm in Handan-ri on the island of Wihwa, play an important role (IPA-5 2003, 75). Additionally, fishing companies are located in Sinuiju. In the city there are also coal deposits (PSC-8 2009, 432).

### Important location for the light industry of DPR Korea

Due to the forest wealth of the upper running tracks of the Yalu, which was one of the external reasons for the Russo-Japanese War (Lautensach 1945, 242), Sinuiju was in the early days the location for collection and distribution of wood. Therefore, lumbermills and industries, which processed wood, for example the manufacture of paper, pulp and matches were developed. With the construction of the Suphung power plant and the opening of the Manpho- and Hyesan- railway lines, the system of wood transport was changed. The Suphung power plant also provided the necessary energy for the establishment of the industry. Consequently, starting from the textile industry, all kinds of industries were established in Sinuiju, which now developed itself into an industrial city. (Kang Sŏk-o 1984, 308). Especially in the northern and southern peripheral regions of the former urban area, industrial companies such as a shipyard, textile mills, soap factories and pharmaceutical companies emerged (Saitschikow 1958, 323).

The most important industrial sectors for Sinuiju were the sectors of mechanical engineering, chemical industry and the light industry (textile, shoes, food, consumer durables) (IPA-5 2003, 74-75). Sinuiju is one of the most significant locations for the light industry in the DPR Korea (PSC-8 2009, 432).

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

Sinuiju	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	6 (23)	4 (34)	9 (22)	9 (12)	11 (36)	7
Companies-important	7 (5)	11 (3)	9 (9)		8 (19)	9 (10)
Cultural institution			4 (20)			

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

Sinuiju	KOFC	MOU	IPA	KCNA	KIET	Summary
Companies-total	6	3	8-12-4	13	18-9	9-12

The ranking in terms of the number of companies coincides broadly, on the whole, with the rank in terms of the population (Rank 6). When evaluating the MOU source, Sinuiju has a better ranking, since MOU has included a lot of light industry companies. On the other hand, Sinuiju has an especially bad ranking during the evaluation of the KIET source, since their focus is on heavy industry.

**Table Sinuiju-V. Specification (in parenthesis: number of companies)**

Sinuiju	Light Industry	Heavy Industry	Mining	Energy
KOFC	6 (8)	13 (15)	–	–
MOU	7 (23)	11 (10)	14 (1)	–
IPA	6 (15)	19 (7)	–	–
KCNA	10 (6)	7 (6)	–	–
KIET	7 (17)	10 (19)	–	–

It is clear that Sinuiju is a city, in which light industry plays a significant role. On the other hand, in the KCNA source numerous factories in the field of mechanical engineering are presented.

In chapter III.7.3. ten companies have been identified as important: Rakwŏn Machine Complex, Factory 9<sup>th</sup> August (Sinuiju Mining Machine Factory), Sinuiju Spinning Machine Factory, Sinuiju Chemical Fibre Complex, Sinuiju Enamel Ware Factory, Sinuiju Cosmetics Factory, Sinuiju Shoes Factory, Sinuiju Footwear Factory, Sinuiju Textile Factory, Sinuiju Family Goods Factory.

One of the biggest machine factories of North Korea is the Rakwŏn Machine Complex in the South of the city. Mainly different kinds of excavators are produced here, as well as equipment like centrifuges and generators. The Samgyo-chŏn,<sup>20</sup> which supplies the industrial water, flows in the South of the Complex. The factory has a good transport connection, since it is situated near a two-lane paved road as well as a railway between Sinuiju and Pyongyang. The Rakwŏn Machine Complex employs about 4,500 workers and operates on an area of 93,000 m<sup>2</sup>. During the Japanese occupation this company was only a small repair shop for agricultural machines (KOFC 2010, 257). The factory began its production again on September 1945 under the name of Sinuiju Machine Plant (since 1947 Rakwŏn Machine Plant) and produced different agricultural machines (IPA-5 2003, 76-77). During the Korean War it was converted into a munitions factory. In 1952 the reconstruction and enlargement of the factory, which was destroyed during the Korean War, commenced.

<sup>20</sup> The 129 km long Samgyo-chŏn, a tributary of the Yalu, forms the Southern boundary of Sinuiju-si to Ryongchon-kun and then flows into the Phihyon-kun.



**Figure Sinuiju-II.** Rakwŏn Machine Complex (2012)



**Figure Sinuiju-III.** Rakwŏn Machine Complex (view from Samgyo-chŏn) (2012)

In the Factory 9<sup>th</sup> August (Sinuiju Mining Machine Factory), which is located in the Ryŏngsang-dong district, mining machines of all kinds (high-speed excavators, rotation excavators, loaders, drills and wagons) are produced. 3,000 employees<sup>21</sup> work on an area of 143,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

The Sinuiju Spinning Machine Factory is one of the five major machine factories of the province. The factory was extended in the second half of the 80s.<sup>22</sup>

The Sinuiju Chemical Fibre Complex is located in the northeast of the rail station of Sinuiju in the district of Pangjik-dong<sup>23</sup> and has an area of 490,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The sector for paper making, the branch factory for the manufacture of caustic soda, the chemical factory Tongrim, the chemical factory Sinuiju and the factory for dyeing equipment Sinuiju are subordinately organized under the Sinuiju Chemical Fiber Complex.

The United Chemical Fibre Factory Sinuiju emerged in 1919 from the Japanese Fuji Paper Company as the Chosen Paper Factory (annual capacity of 1,000 t), in order to manufacture pulp. 1921 it was incorporated into the Oji Paper Company and expanded. After the Korean takeover of the factory, several expansions were carried out, which resulted in the beginning of the production of newspaper and paper for school books. The destruction during the Korean War was followed by the reconstruction. In 1955 the production was resumed. The raw materials for the pulp produced in this factory were used from reeds in the reed fields of the mouth of the Yalu (Pidan-sŏm, Ryongchon-kun) and from rice straw of the Western agricultural belt along the Green Sea from the city of Jongju, as well as from corn stalks. Salt originates from the salt works from the West coast area, and caustic soda, produced by electrolysis, is needed for the production of chemical fibres and of paper. Electric energy is drawn from the Suphung Power Plant.<sup>24</sup>

21 KOFC 2010, 259; also KIET 1996, 266-267.

22 For more informations: KIET 1996, 287-288.

23 Chosun Ilbo 13 November 13, 1995; KOFC (2010, 587) claims that it is located in Majŏn-dong.

24 Han'guk-sanop-unhaeng 2000, 242-244 and 428-429; KOFC 2010, 587-589.

The Sinuiju Enamel Ware Factory was built in the 50s and is the largest small hardware producer of the DPRK with its multiple departments and a branch factory. 130 varieties of enamelled small metal hardware is produced in this factory, i.e. cutlery, crockery, cups, buckets, pots, pans and basins (Choe Sŏn-yŏng 2001). In the year of 2003 the factory was modernised (KCNA 17<sup>th</sup> September 2003). The factory also produces for export.

The Sinuiju Cosmetics Factory was built between 1945 and 1950 (KJY-23 1990, 438)<sup>25</sup> and originally was located in the center of the city. It produced soap, paper soap, tooth paste, crèmes and body perfume. In approximately 1990 the factory was modernised and expanded in 1995 (KIET 1996, 171). During a visit by Kim Jong-Il in June 1999, the relocation of the factory to South-Sinuiju was ordered by him. The new location was situated about 5 km from the city center, where an industrial area was planned. In January 2001 the factory was completed on the new site with departments for soap, tooth paste and cosmetics (Kim Tu-hwan 2003). In January 2004 a department for the production of boxes and other packaging was added. The cosmetics factory Sinuiju is now considered as the largest cosmetics factory of the DPRK. In November 2004 North Korean media reported that the production under sterile conditions was now possible. The products of Sinuiju are immensely popular in the DPRK and compete with the products of the cosmetics factory Pyongyang. The products made in Sinuiju under the name of “Nŏ-wa na” (You and Me) are intended for the export of the product line. Meanwhile the products are also distributed and sold within the DPRK under the product name of “Pŏmhyanggi” (spring scent).



Figure Sinuiju-IV. Sinuiju Textile Factory (2012)



Figure Sinuiju-V. Pomhyanggi-Products from Sinuiju from a Hotel in Wonsan (2012)

In the Sinuiju Shoes Factory mainly boots, which are sold in the whole province of Phyongbuk, are produced.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted after Jŏng Ŭn-i (2012).

The Sinuiju Footwear Factory is actually the largest shoe factory of the DPRK, because it has an annual capacity of 20 million of produced shoes. Mostly textile/cloth shoes are mass-produced here. The manufactured sports shoes, work shoes, rubber boots, PVC shoes, basketball shoes and simple cloth sports shoes are also partially exported. This factory was built already during the Japanese colonial rule. In 1982 16% of the North Korean shoe production could be allocated to this very factory. In April 1992 a special part of the factory responsible for the production of exporting products was finished (KOFC 2010, 608). This factory with its 4,000 employees has its very own energy department generating steam from coal, which is necessary to provide the factory with energy (KIET 1996, 110). In 2009 and 2010 the factory was further modernised (KOFC 2010, 608). According to the statements made by refugees from North Korea, the sports shoes made by the factory have an excellent reputation for footwear. There are 3,500 persons, who are employed by the Sinuiju Textile Factory, working in an area of 154,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The factory was built in August 1945 as stated by the (South) Korean commerce bank, and was put in operation in 1947. However, the facilities were destroyed during the Korean War. After the reconstruction, the factory resumed its operation in July 1959.<sup>26</sup> Afterwards, several extensions of the factory were made. It was announced in 1983 that only local raw material would be used. The factory is supplied with staple fibres by the United Chemical Fibre Factory Sinuiju, although energy is provided by in-house thermal power plant. The internally produced yarn is not only used for the in-house subsequent process to cloth, but additionally is supplying small and medium-sized textile companies.

The Sinuiju Family Goods Factory was founded in 1969. In this factory aluminium and resin, amongst other things, are produced in order to manufacture a variety of products for domestic use (IPA-5 2003, 77).

Apart from the companies that were identified as important in Chapter III.7.3, there are certainly numerous other companies in Sinuiju that will be presented here.

In the Factory 4th March communication cables are manufactured. In April 2002 the factory was expanded with a modern production line. This production line, the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, the Rodong Sinmun, notably singles out on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2002, is capable to produce thin insulated wire, as well as thin insulated wire consisting of several strands (Yonhap News Agency 2011). Furthermore, this factory, which is also regarded as an armament factory, produces annually approximately 150,000 pairs of white rubber gloves.<sup>27</sup>

In the factory September General Iron Enterprises annually 96,000 tons of low-grade

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26 Han'guk-sanop-ünhaeng 2000, 407. According to other data, which are based on an article by the North Korean Rodong Sinmun, the Factory supposedly was built in August 1959 (KIET 1996, 76).

27 Han'guk-sanop-ünhaeng 2000, 450.

steel (*samhwachöl*),<sup>28</sup> 90,000 tons of steel and 90,000 rolled steel is produced.<sup>29</sup> The factory is named after the event when Kim Il-sung supposedly visited in September 1970 and determined the location for the industrial plant. Additionally, it is rumoured that an electric furnace was introduced. The steel factory was modernised with the help of scientists of the Technical University Kim Chaek from the capital Pyongyang (KCNA January 13, 2005).

The Sinuiju Streptomycin<sup>30</sup> Factory is a special factory for antibiotics, in which, amongst other things, the antibiotic-containing ointment Terramycin, medicine for injections etc. are produced.<sup>31</sup>

The Sinuiju Pulp Factory is located in Sinuiju Sumun-dong and is approximately 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>. It was built in September 1949 in order to manufacture rice paper. Starting from 1956 the artificial silk paper production commenced. In 1971 hemp and flax was processed and cigarette paper and packaging papers for food products was produced. As a general rule, reed from the river mouth of the Yalu, corn stalks and rice straw are used as raw materials. The artificial silk pulp is delivered to the Textile Factory Sinuiju, but the sulfuric pulp is necessary for the in-house paper production. Furthermore, the binder material serves use in the briquette and pavement production. The quality of the products is likely to be similar to the paper production department of the United Chemical Factory Sinuiju. The fact that the same machines are used for different kinds of paper might have a negative impact on the quality of the products.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, the Korea Amnokgang Trading Corporation has a registered office in Sinuiju. This determination was handed over in 1977. Assigned to this factory are the export products bases for coloured metal, non-metal, reed processing, marine and agricultural products, clothing, electronic accessories and decorative buckles in Sinuiju and surrounding areas. One focus of its activities lies in the trade with the border areas of the PR China.<sup>33</sup>

### **Sinuiju special economic zone**

North Korea surprised the world by establishing a capitalistic “Special Administrative Region of Sinuiju“ in September 2002. This region was supposed to develop itself into an international center for finance, trade, IT industry, modern science, entertainment

28 It is 90-95% steel, since anthracite was used at its smelting. When using coke, 97% steel would be created.

29 Han’guk-sanop-ünhaeng 2000, 57.

30 Streptomycin is an active ingredient, which is obtained from soil microbes and is used for the production of most antibiotics for the human and veterinary medicine as well as for agriculture.

31 Han’guk-sanop-ünhaeng 2000, 247.

32 Han’guk-sanop-ünhaeng 2000, 430.

33 Naenara: „Korean Trading Company Amnokgang“ <http://www.naenara.com.kp/de/realtrade/?company+5+4>

and tourism. For this purpose, it was planned that the region should receive a largely autonomous government until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2052. In this manner, the issuance of passports and currency was planned as well. Even their own flag was already designed: with peony on a blue background. Similarities with Hong Kong were probably not unintentional. Official languages were supposed to be Chinese, Korean and English.

Obviously the setup of the economic zone was supposed to be more consistent than the failed attempt in Rajin-Sonbong. As governor—it was highly unusual—a foreigner, Yang Bin, was appointed, who was a 39-year-old Dutch with Chinese origin. According to Forbes, he was, at the time of his planned appointment as governor, the second-richest Chinese in the world.

North Korea is by all means interested in the establishment of special economic zones. However the country is not interested in external political influences. Easily definable peripheral positions seem to be best suited for conducting international experiments from the view of North Korean rulers. While there is enough industrial water and energy from the Water Plant Suphung, the port itself seems to be very small and the rest of the infrastructure is weakly developed. Based on the bad infrastructure, the construction of an industrial complex was rejected by the South Korean Hyundai group.

Shortly after his appointment as governor, Yang Bin announced that several hundred thousand current inhabitants of the 132 km<sup>2</sup> area were to be dispelled and that a three meter high wall was to be built. Immediately rumours circulated that especially the districts in the North of the city, Apgang-dong, Ponbu-dong, Yŏkjŏn-dong, Chaeha-dong; would be affected by the resettlement to undetermined locations or to South-Sinuiju.<sup>34</sup>

According to a study by KOTRA, it was expected that the investments in this North Korean city would be made by the Chinese and overseas-Chinese, and less made by “Western” companies. Investments of “Western” companies were scheduled as recently as in four to five years later, when improvements in the infrastructure and the business environment would be significantly visible (Yoo, Cheong-mo 2002).

However, things turned out to be quite different than expected. Already in the beginning of October 2002, Chinese security authorities arrested Yang Bin in Shenyang. He was accused with tax evasion and illegal business practices by the Chinese. Later, Yang Bin was sentenced to 14 years in prison.

At a later time Julie Sa, who was the daughter of two Chinese parents, although born in South Korea, where she also grew up, but later emigrated to California, was under discussion as a potential governor. But by the end of 2014 the media announced that the North Koreans had proclaimed the end of the project of the Special Zone Sinuiju.

What were the reasons for this rapid failure?

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34 Kukmin Ilbo September 30, 2002, <http://www.kmib.co.kr/html/kmview/2002/0930/091874442311121400.html>

Above all, the project was not sufficiently coordinated with China. This initially was pointed out by the reasons that lie with the person of Yang Bin. China possibly had concerns that Sinuiju could become a gambling hell for the Chinese, in which crime and money laundering could rise from. In particular, Sinuiju could have been a pesky competitor in regards to investments for the region of North Eastern China.

Since 2009, though, the development of the Sinuiju special economic zone has been put back on the agenda and under debate, due to an agreement with China concerning the islands of Wihwa and Hwanggŭmphyŏng, in order to develop these areas as joint free trade zones. Also, China has reached an agreement with North Korea over the construction of the new Yalu River Highway Bridge (Tong 2010). In 2010 the construction began, and 2014 is supposed to be the year of completion. The new bridge is located approximately 12-13 km downstream from the existing “Korea-China Friendship Bridge,” near Hwanggŭmphyŏng, and connects the Dandong New City Zone Guomenwan Exhibition Center with Sinuiju.

On 12.3.2011 the Hwanggŭmphyŏng and Wihwa Island Economic Zone Law was enacted by North Korea, however negotiations between China and Korea are still running and not finished. Most concretely seem to be the considerations regarding Hwanggŭmphyŏng, which is the southern island from the two. An industry specialised on trade and information, tourism and culture as well as a modern agriculture and processing industry, is planned there. It is also planned that there once should be up to 300,000 North Koreans working there (KBS World Radio 2011).

Another area near Sinuiju, which is considered in the plan for the construction of special economic regions, is the area around Taegyedo, where extensive land reclamation was carried out.

Sinuiju is the final destination of the railway line between Pyongyang and Sinuiju. From here, there are rail connections available to China. The rail station “Sinuiju Youth” was built in 1905 as part of the construction of the railway line from Seoul to Sinuiju. This station is the border station for trains to and from Beijing. Both passengers as well as cargo are transported. In the rail station South-Sinuiju, which also lies on the route between Pyongyang and Sinuiju, the Tŏkhyŏn-Line (South-Sinuiju – Uiju – Tŏkhyŏn) and the Paekma-Line (South-Sinuiju – Pihyon – Yomju) fork off. Major roads lead from Sinuiju to the direction of Pyongyang, Uiju and Pihyon. From Sinuiju there are 236 km to Pyongyang.

In the second half of the 2000s, a new wide road between Old-Sinuiju and the Southern boundary of the city was built (Figure Sinuiju-VI and Figure Sinuiju-VII).



**Figure Sinuiju-VI.** Nam-Sinuiju 2006



**Figure Sinuiju-VII.** Nam-Sinuiju 2012

Through the port of Sinuiju cargo ships go to the islands located in the lower course of the Yalu and as far as Ryongampho, Pidan-sŏm, Cholsan, Jongju, Nampho and Haeju on the coast of the Yellow Sea. Through the upper course of the Yalu, cargo-and passenger ships come from and go to Uiju, Okkang and Chongsong. Passenger ships are also used as inner-city transportation.

#### **Center of education and culture in the northwest of the DPR Korea**

Sinuiju was formerly and is nowadays a city of education. There are numerous secondary educational establishments. Several colleges are specialised in the areas of industry and teacher training. Additionally there are colleges for agriculture, for medicine, for military studies and for the party cadre training. A research institute is concerned with chemical fibres. Furthermore, there are a considerable number of cultural institutions, which is customary for a capital of a province. On the whole, Sinuiju has the fourth-most cultural institutions in all North Korean cities as stated by a table in the IPA (2003) (Table Sinuiju-III).

#### **The ten party members of Rakwŏn**

The Rakwŏn Machine Complex is the largest company of the city. The word Rakwŏn has a special ring in Korea, since it has the meaning of “paradise.” The Rakwŏn Machine Complex therefore was material for the propaganda stories of Sin Pho-hyang and the “Ten Party Members of Rakwŏn.” These were, so according to the narrative, working in the cast iron division of the Rakwŏn Machine Factory (the former name of the company) during the Korean War. At the end of June 1952, Kim Il-sung took part in a plenary meeting of his party cell to discuss the preliminary work for the construction after the War. Sin Pho-hyang, one of the workers, remembered during this conversation that Japanese imperialism

had indeed destroyed everything; however it also had been possible to rebuild everything in two to three years. Consequentially, the same should be possible after the cessation of the War. Thus, Kim Il-sung should not be too worried. Kim Il-sung was quite impressed by this assurance according to this narrative. Therefore, he could not forget the words spoken by Sin Pho-hyang (Verlag für Fremdsprachige Literatur 2001, 233). As shown in the above, the ten Party members from Rakwŏn are always remembered, especially when it comes to conjuring the “revolutionary spirit of the independent reconstruction,” like for example in the official New Year’s message of the DPRK in the year of 2000.

### **Capital of the province of Phyongbuk**

The capital of Phyongbuk Province was initially Uiju. Sinuiju, though, was administratively a part of Uiju. In the administrative reform of 1913 Uiju was put together with Sinuiju, however. Sinuiju thus became the capital of the province and in 1923 the provincial administrative building was relocated to Sinuiju. In 1914 Sinuiju was officially declared as a city (*pu*, since 1947 *si*). In 1939 at the expense of Uiju-kun, Sinuiju’s urban area was enlarged. In the reorganizations in the 50s Sinuiju again lost areas, in 1952 to the *kun* of Uiju and Ryongchŏn, in 1954 nine *ri* came to the newly founded Kwangsŏng-kun. In 1989 Sinuiju was divided into three *kuyok* (Nam, Kwangmyŏng, Kangan), although they were abolished again in November 1991.

### **High population density in Old–Sinuiju**

The city was laid out in a checkerboard pattern. At the Yalu, where rafts were cut from the logs from the forest regions of the North, large wood processing factories were created. In 1938 the population of Sinuiju had grown to 52,384 inhabitants, of whom 16% were Japanese and 12% Chinese (Lautensach 1945, 246). The population groups lived in different quarters; there was a Japanese street where today the district of Sinwŏn-dong exists, and a Chinese street, where today the district of Namsŏ-dong and Namha-dong lie (Yi Yo-sep 2002). The Koreans lived in the remaining other districts. In 1945 the city had approximately 120,000 inhabitants. Majŏn-dong, located somewhere east from the rail station, was first considered as the residence of the especially poor population groups early in the 40s.

Sinuiju was victim of heavy bombing by the US war planes during the Korean War. General Douglas MacArthur had ordered the formation of a wasteland between the front and the Korean-Chinese border. On 8<sup>th</sup> November 1950, therefore, 79 B-29 550-ton incendiaries landed on Sinuiju with the goal of erasing the city from the map (Cumings 2004, 2).

The enormous efforts that were necessary for the reconstruction are thus apparent to building the legend around Sin Pho-hyang and the ten Party members of the Machine Factory Rakwon.

The city center of Sinuiju is completely overpopulated. Already in the 50s Saitchikow (1958, 322) wrote that the lack of a suitable ground for the city was the reason why the city was designed in a compact structure and that the 127,000 inhabitants had to find space in an area of little more than 2 km<sup>2</sup>. There were no large parks and gardens in the city. Every patch of ground was occupied with apartment buildings that were allocated in rectangular areas. Straight roads with multi-storey buildings occupied the banks of the river. In the northern and southern fringes of the city several industrial companies had been established.

The provincial capital of Phyongbuk, Sinuiju, is the liveliest city within the DPR Korea. Correspondent with the status as a border town, a vibrant trade and many local changes in the population exist. This is the location, where foreign culture fastest penetrates. Since the 1980s the most famous market in Sinuiju is the Chaeha Market. It was reported, though, that this market vanished in the 1990s (Chosun Ilbo November 13, 1995).

Satellite images from the 2000s, however, indicated that there was a growth relating to this market from 2002 until 2011. Then, in 2012 the market vanished. A new large market was built at the southern border of Old-Sinuiju (North Korean Economy Watch 2013).

The provincial headquarters of the Workers' Party is located in Ponbu-dong, where a lot of cadres of the provincial headquarters of the Party are concentrated. The provincial administrative committee also is in Sinwŏn-dong, where also the high cadre of the provincial administration live. In addition, except special exceptions, most of the cadre lives in the city, but the factually powerful live concentrated in Kwanmun-dong, Kŭnhwa-dong and Yŏkjŏn-dong. The apartment buildings of the provincial cadre are separated from the houses of the population of Sinuiju by a wall (NK Chosun.com 2003).

In 1975 a 3<sup>rd</sup> class hotel with 53 rooms was built. It is located in Kwanmun-dong and is mostly used by the Chinese. It is situated five minutes by car away from the customs office.

### **Old-Sinuiju, Nam-Sinuiju, Yŏnha: three urbanized areas**

The urbanized areas of Sinuiju are divided roughly into three areas:

Old-Sinuiju, or North-Sinuiju. This is the original Sinuiju, which was protected by dams.

Nam-Sinuiju, or South-Sinuiju, the area south from Old Sinuiju, especially around the former Rakwŏn-rodongjagu and the former Kwangsŏng-up.

The area of the former Yŏnha-rodongjagu in the Northeast of the city.

## Incorporations in 1961, 1963 and 1989

After Sinuiju was reduced in size in the 50s, it came to incorporations in the 60s as well as in 1989:

- In 1961 Sangan-ri and Hadan-ri (both in Uiju-kun), as well as Majŏn-ri and Sŏnsang-ri (both in Kwangsŏng-kun) were incorporated into the city
- In 1963 Kwangsŏng-kun was dissolved and, except for Samsang-ri, was integrated into Sinuiju-si. Kwangsŏng-up (1954), Rakwŏn-rodongjagu (1957) and eleven *ri* were affected by this change.
- In 1989 the incorporations of parts of Uiju-kun, which were incorporated as Yŏnha-dong to Sinuiju-si, were made, as well as the incorporation of Tajiri (Uiju-kun).

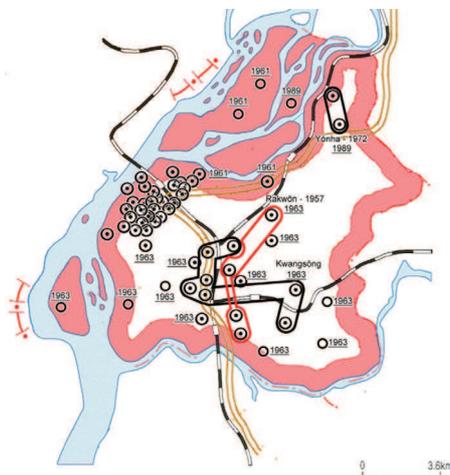


Figure Sinuiju-VIII. Incorporations

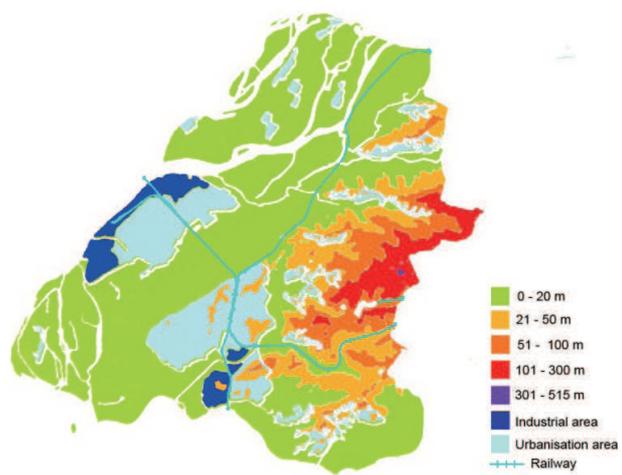


Figure Sinuiju-IX. Urbanization and industrial area as well as topography (Source: Yi Sang-jun et.al. 2011, 75, 83)

## Urbanization process in Sinuiju

In 1955 31 *dong* were founded in the city of Sinuiju, which were reduced to 25 in the course of the restructuring of the city of Sinuiju. Additionally, Kwangsŏng-ŭp, which was founded in 1954, and the in 1957 founded Rakwŏn-rodongjagu (Kwangsŏng-kun), are part of the city of Sinuiju. Both are located nowadays within the city borders of Sinuiju.

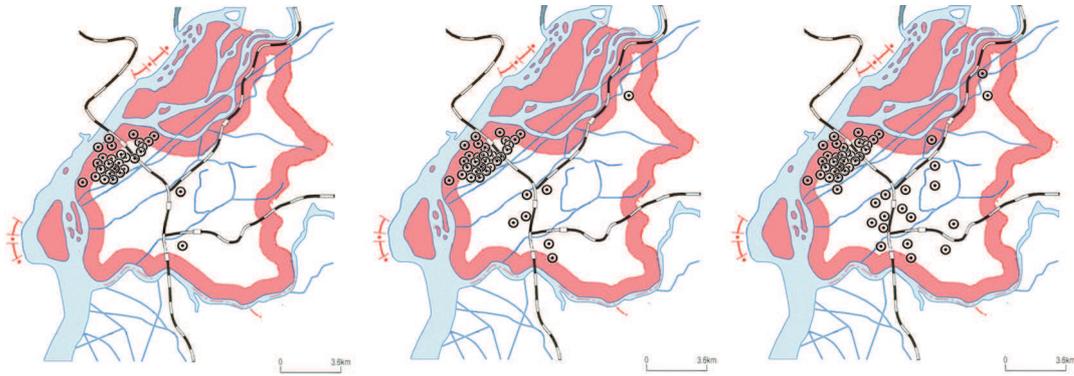


Figure Sinuiju-X. Dong 1961

Figure Sinuiju-XI. Dong 1976

Figure Sinuiju-XII. Dong 1994

In 1963 Kwangsŏng-up is divided into three *dong*, and Rakwŏn-rodongjagu becomes a *dong*. Sinphung-dong is added to Majŏn-ri, which therefore simultaneously is ascending to Majŏn-dong.

In 1967 due to the splitting four new *dong* were established, three of which are located in Old- Sinuiju, one in the South.

In 1972 Yŏnha-rodongjagu emerges. In 1976 Rakchŏng separates itself from Rakwŏn-dong.

In 1989 five new *dong* come into existence from the former *ri* located in the South of Old- Sinuiju. At the same time, Rakchŏng-dong and Rakwŏn-dong are divided in two *dong* each.

Three new *dong* each emerge from the separation of existing *dong* in 1990 and in 1994. Four of them are located south from Old-Sinuiju, and one within Old-Sinuiju. Another result from the separation is Yŏnha-dong, which emerged from Yŏnha-rodongjagu.

**Table Sinuiju-VI.** Number of *dong* in the regions of Old-Sinuiju, Nam-Sinuiju and Yŏnha

	Old-Sinuiju	South, (Southeast)	Yŏnha
1955	31	2	–
1957	29	3	–
1961	25	3	–
1963	25	5	–
1967	26	8	–
1972	26	8	1
1976	26	9	1
1989	26	16	1
1990	27	18	1
1994	27	20	2

Table Sinuiju-VI. shows the distribution of *dong* (*up*, *rodongjagu*) within Sinuiju in today's border.

### The Development of Nam-Sinuiju since the end of the 1980s

It is clear that the administrative structure within Old-Sinuiju was consolidated already around 1961, and between 1961 and 1994, only two new *dong* were created through the separation from another *dong*.

The development outside the old city, which was surrounded by a dam, was much livelier. In 1955 only one *dong*, Siphung-dong in the Southeast, which was incorporated in 1963 into Majŏn-dong, existed beyond the old city center of Sinuiju. In addition Kwangsŏng-up, which is the administrative headquarter of Kwangsŏng-kun, was incorporated into the city of Sinuiju in 1963. In 1957 Rakwŏn-rodongjagu was founded. In 1963 Kwangsŏng-up was divided into three *dong*. The first signs of development in the South of Sinuiju are exhibited by the newly emerged *dong* in the years of 1967 and 1976.



Figure Sinuiju-XIII. Sinuiju (2012)



Figure Sinuiju-XIV. Nam-Sinuiju (2012)

Far-reaching changes have become apparent then since the end of the 80s. The North Korean government had promoted a program for the development of Nam-Sinuiju (South-Sinuiju).

Due to the constant threat of flood for Sinuiju, it was built in the 80s 5 km away from Sinuiju, on a slightly higher terrain in Nam-Sinuiju. There have been several factories already in this region, for example the Rakwŏn Machine Complex.

Originally it was planned to relocate urban functions from Old-Sinuiju to Nam-Sinuiju. However, only the construction of living areas was implemented. The construction

of the living areas though was problematic due to the presence of the existing industrial facilities. (Jang Se-Hun 2006b, 491-492).

## Statistics

Therefore in 2002 Sinuiju consisted of 49 *dong* and nine *ri*. The PSC-8 (2009), however, recorded 50 *dong* and nine *ri*, without giving any indications to the *dong*.

	<i>Dong-Formation</i>	<i>Dong-Splitting</i>	
1955 (33)	32	-	external 1
1957 (32)	1	-2	external 2
1961 (28)	-	-7/3	external 2
1963 (30)	-	(2)	
1967 (34)	-	4	
1972 (35)	1	-	external 1
1976 (36)	-	1	external 1
1989 (43)	5	2	
1990 (46)	-	3	
1994 (49)	-	3	

## Sinuiju – Korea’s Door to the Eurasian Mainland

Sinuiju is the capital of the province of Phyongan-bukto. The city is located 40 km above the mouth of the Yalu and at only 6 m above sea level, which is the reason for the latent danger of flood catastrophes. Sinuiju owes its existence to the construction of the railway line from Seoul to here, which was finished in 1905. The Japanese put the distance in this way that the route didn’t cross Uiju, but a swamp area in the West, so that the line crossed the Yalu. The final destination on Korean soil was named “New Uiju,” thus Sinuiju, by the Japanese. In September 2002 North Korea surprised the world, when it announced the establishment of a capitalistic “Special Administrative Region Sinuiju.” This should have been developed as an international center for finance, trade, IT industry, modern science, entertainment and tourism. However, the project was stopped when the designated governor, Yang Bin, a Dutch with Chinese origins, was arrested by the Chinese authorities. At this time the negotiations for Chinese-Korean cooperation for the development of the islands of Hwanggŭmphyŏng and Wihwa are under way. A special potential of Sinuiju for Korea lies in the possible expansion of its functions as a door to the Eurasian mainland.

From 1989 to 1994 the number of *dong* in the South has more than doubled, while

Old Sinuiju almost stagnated.