



Photo by Korean Central News Agency


“Only realistic works of literature and art which provide a vivid and profound portrayal of real life, can touch the hearts of people.”
KIM IL SUNG



Photo by Korean Central News Agency

“Shooting a film for the cinema is the art of transferring onto the screen an animated, visual depiction of human life.”
KIM JONG IL

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North Korean Film Collection



Photo by Korean Central News Agency

“Our Film Should Be Based on Korean Life.”
- Kim Jong Il -



Introduction

Is it true that the former North Korean leader Kim Jong Il ordered the kidnap of South Korea’s most famous film director? Yes. Kim Jong Il had two primary obsessions: “the development of nuclear weapons” protecting his hermit kingdom from outside forces like America, and “cinema”.

Thanks to generous funding support at the Institute of Asian Research, the Asian Library holds a comprehensive North Korean film collection in the format of DVDs. A substantial part of the collection is unique, meaning there are not many other libraries holding North Korean film DVDs in Canada. The collection holds films produced in each decade of the 20th century since the 1960s, all the way through the 21st century. The Asian Library’s North Korean film collection will provide another angle into the mysterious country people seem to fear and misunderstand in equal measure.

도라지꽃 A Broad Bellflower
Toraji kkot
Call No.: PN1997 T673 1987



A Broad Bellflower is one of the most cinematic films in North Korea. The film tells of a man's regret about his youthful decision to leave his lover and follow a wandering, indulgent life.

중앙공격수 Center Forward
Chungang konggyöksu
Call No.: PN1997 C4862 1978



In this North Korean football-themed movie, unique North Korean cultural aspects infuse relationships between players and management, family members, and senior and junior players.

홍길동 Hong Kil-dong
Hong Kil-dong
Call No.: PN1997 H659 1986



Sometimes called the first North Korean film made purely for entertainment value, this film centres on the legendary Robin Hood-type character of Korean folk law, Hong Kil-dong.

민족과 운명 The Nation and Destiny
Minjok kwa unmyöng
Call No.: PN1997 M5673 2011



The Nation and Destiny series was first shown in 1992. Regarded as one of the most noteworthy achievements in North Korean film history, it was a trigger of "the second literary revolution," the former North Korean leader King Jong Il initiated.

내가 본 나라 The Country I Saw
Nae ka pon nara
Call No.: PN1997 N3237 2010



This film series provides some insight into how North Koreans are supposed to perceive the outside world and what an outsider would think of North Korea.

꽃파는 처녀 The Flower Girl
Kkot p'anün ch'önyö
Call No.: PN1997 K597 2010



Adapted in 1972 from a revolutionary opera of the same name, The Flower Girl is perhaps North Korea's most renowned film. Both the film and the opera toured across China and other Eastern Bloc countries.

Useful Sources & Links

North Korean DVDs at UBC
<http://asian.library.ubc.ca/news/2015/09/30/nkfilm/>

A complete list of North Korean DVD collection is available on the Asian Library website.

North Korean Films
<http://northkoreanfilms.com>

Simon Fowler, a British film critic, runs a website on North Korean cinema and provides a comprehensive English-language database of North Korean films.

Korean Film Archive
<http://www.koreafilm.org>

This government funded institute collects and preserves the data related to Korean cinema such as scenarios, posters, still photos, bibliographies, DVDs, online videos, and all movie films shown in Korea. The institute also holds a number of copies of North Korean films.