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The adventures of Hong Gil-dong, the hero of the two Koreas from Joseon Dynasty novel to South Korean translation and North Korean movie

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The story of Hong Gil-dong is a heroic novel widely read in the 19th century, dating back to the Joseon Dynasty (1392 ~ 1897) before the two Koreas were divided in 1953. Today, this classic is reborn as animated films, TV shows, movies, and online games in both Koreas, and communicates with international readers as the most quintessential Korean classic translated into English. The 2016 edition of the English translation is sourced from the Joseon Dynasty classic by a South Korean author. This paper aims to examine how the discourse of the hero is reinterpreted in the North Korean film produced in 1986, swaying in the wave of structural dynamism by comparative analysis with the international version by the South Korean author. To that end, as a method of study, this paper applies the analysis of the contents of the novels, movies, and previous studies. From this, differences in character identity, characters based on historical interpretation, thematic consciousness, and the establishment of an ideal society are deduced into the results.

Biographical note(s) of the author(s)

Dr. JungRan PARK has mainly published on the topics of the subculturalization of S.Korean visual media viewing in N.Korea, two Koreas' education, culture from a comparative perspective, and the settlement of N.Korean in S.Korea, since receiving her Ph.D. from Ewha Womans University in Seoul, South Korea in 2006. From 2006 to 2010, she was a senior researcher at the Seoul National University. She then spent two years at the Eurasian National University in Kazakhstan and five years and a half until August 2021 at the University of Tartu, Estonia, where she was a Visiting Professor of Korean Studies.

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