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The Political Symbolism and Sociocultural Meaning of the New North Korean Film <A Day and a Night>

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<A Day and a Night> is the first new art film to be released in six years in North Korea. It shows the theme of the struggle against ‘anti-Party, counter-revolutionary factionalists’ as well as the ‘Desperate Spirit of Safeguarding the Leader.’ The uniqueness of advertising through a trailer and nationwide simultaneous release has peaked the interest of the North Korean people. The stylishly-edited trailer shows that the film is in spy/anti-espionage genre that is both entertaining and captivating. In addition, the digitalized logo of the film and experimentation with kinetic typography also stand out.

This study analyzes the political symbolism and sociopolitical meaning of the film based on the trailer and the tale of the individual on whom the main character is based on. The political symbolism is three-fold. First, <A Day and a Night> applies the situation in 1958 to 2022 to equate the accomplishments of the first ten years of the Kim Jong-un regime with the *Chollima* miracle, and to compare the complete transformation to socialism in 1958 with the notion of comprehensive socialist development in 2022. Second, by considering the current internal and external challenges as the same as the post-war situation, it seeks to continue the legacy and tradition of self-reliance. Third, the film also conveys the political message of elevating Kim Jong-un to a leader that must defended with one’s life. The film’s sociocultural meaning can also be summarized as follows. First, it satisfies the public’s need for cultural consumption. Second, it establishes the brand value of *Chosun* film. Third, it urges overcoming current difficulties by eliminating factors that threaten the system. It appears that looking up to the year ‘1958’ will replace the ‘1970s style’ which was used as the driver for social construction early in the Kim Jong-un regime.

The *Rodong Sinmun* reported that the preview for an art film titled <A Day and a Night> was held at the Pyongyang International Cinema Hall on April 9, 2022. <A Day and a Night> is the first movie to be released in six years since the art film <Graduation Diploma> debuted in November 2016.¹⁾ The report in the *Rodong Sinmun* further exhibited pride in the movie by mentioning how a ‘masterpiece’ had been completed through the theme and subject of the movie, its composition, and its detailed scenes. If <A Day and a Night> is to open the path towards a ‘film revolution for the new century’ for the North Korean film industry which has struggled for a considerable period of time, it implies that ‘innovations’ in terms of the movie’s content and format have been achieved.

The *Rodong Sinmun* summarized <A Day and a Night> as a film that “explains the Juche ideology in depth by describing how defending their leader and safeguarding their system are both a sacred duty and necessary obligation of citizens” through “the revolutionary struggles of an ordinary nurse’s day and night.” The main plot unfolds around the struggle against ‘anti-Party, counter-revolutionary factionalists,’ and the movie’s main theme and subject is to ‘protect the leader unto death.’²⁾ Following the first preview of a new movie in six years, the ‘trailer’ for <A Day and a Night> was broadcast on Korean Central Television (KCTV). The film was later released simultaneously nationwide at the time reserved for movies in commemoration of the Day of the Sun. This widespread advertisement of the movie was an unprecedented form of marketing.

The year 2022 is the 110th anniversary of Kim Il-sung’s birth, the 80th anniversary

1) Newly created art films since the beginning of the Kim Jon-un regime include <Wild Flower Girl>, parts 1 and 2 of <The War Composer Kim Ok-song>, and <Members of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit>. <The Small House at the forefront> in 2013, parts 1 through 5 of the multi-part film <War zone without the Sounds of Gunfire> in 2014, and <Rice Flower> in 2015 continued the release of new films. <The Story of Our Home>, <Traces of Service>, and <Graduation Diploma> were sequentially released in 2016 when the 7th Party Congress of the WPK was held. But there had been no new releases since 2017.

2) “Preview of the New Art Film <A Day and a Night>,” *Rodong Sinmun*, April 10, 2022.

of Kim Jong-il's birth, and the 10th year into Kim Jong-un's rule. 2022 also coincides with the 30th anniversary of the publication of 'Juche Literary Theory' which functions as the guide for North Korean literature and arts. North Korea needed a 'masterpiece' that would represent the Kim Jong-un era to heighten its status as a cultural power and to revitalize the social role of arts and literature in 2022—the year where so many important political and sociocultural anniversaries overlap. In this context, <A Day and Night> is meaningful not only as the first masterpiece that breaks the hiatus of the North Korean film industry but also as an 'exemplary' film. Although only the trailer was available at the time, this study seeks to analyze the political symbolism and sociocultural meanings of the film by inferring its content through relevant news reports.

Demand for a Masterpiece and Film Revolution

In North Korea, films are powerful tools for cultivating the public. Since early in his rule, Kim Jong-un has demanded that arts and literature strictly abide by the cultural guidance of the party to make 'the creation, scheduling, and imagery in our-style' and to 'create masterpieces that are perfect in every aspect.'³⁾ But these orders failed to result in significant art products despite the need for North Korean culture to meet global standards in accordance with the national goal of building a culturally powerful socialist country. Eventually, Kim Jong-un criticized the stagnation of the arts and literature industry for ignoring the needs of the times at the 9th National Conference of Artists in 2014. The film industry remained in a standstill despite urges to learn the creational spirit of the Moranbong Band which was the icon of innovation. The cause of the hiatus in the film industry was diagnosed as 'the ideologically complacent sense of defeatism.'⁴⁾ Following the 7th Party

3) Jong-un Kim, "Let us Make 2012 the Year for the Proud Victory through the Prime of a Powerful and Prosperous Nation by Upholding the Dying Legacy of the Great Leader Kim Jong-il," *Rodong Sinmun*, January 1, 2012.

4) "Let us Begin the Prime of Arts and Literature by Burning Away the Slump with the Biting Winds of Mount Paektu," *Rodong Sinmun*, May 18, 2015.

Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), projects were launched for the film industry to acquire modern filming equipment in order to revitalize the industry but to no avail.⁵⁾ Kim Jong-un's call for "various artistic creations including film and song that captivate the minds of the public"⁶⁾ is an order for arts and literature to properly perform the role of "ideological missiles"⁷⁾ so that masterpieces like the multi-part movie <Nation and Destiny> can similarly represent the Kim Jong-un era.

Emphasis on masterpieces can also be viewed from the perspective of resisting the import of foreign culture. North Korea believes that culture from abroad 'covered in flamboyant veils' has sneaked into North Korea like a virus and spread a reactionary ideology in society. The regime has warned that this has the ability to infiltrate and destroy beyond imagination.⁸⁾ In December 2020, North Korea passed the Reactionary Thought and Culture Denunciation Law in order to eradicate the distribution of foreign culture that has influenced the everyday lives, thinking, and tastes of the North Korean people. Eventually in January 2021, North Korea's National Film Agency admitted that the creation of films had remained within 'formalist boundaries' and vowed to reinvigorate the 'North Korean film revolution' by cultivating talented individuals.⁹⁾

North Korea believes that a single film or song can either inspire a struggle or function as a poison that divides society. Unity is being stressed more than ever as North Korea's external and internal difficulties have been exacerbated by international sanctions and the pandemic. The struggle against anti-socialism and non-socialism embodies the political purpose of strengthening the socialist system by preventing the invasion of foreign culture. As a consequence, North Korea is

5) Sung-ryong Kim, "The Everlasting Accomplishment of Contributing to the Development of Independent Film and Arts," *Rodong Sinmun*, February 6, 2017.

6) Jong-un Kim, "New Year's Address," *Rodong Sinmun*, January 1, 2019.

7) "The Power of Socialist Arts and Literature," *Rodong Sinmun*, January 27, 2018.

8) Sung-nam Kim, "Creating Wonderful Masterpieces is the Desperate Demand of the Era and of Revolutionary Development," *Rodong Sinmun*, January 30, 2019.

9) Kwang Ri, "The Great Enthusiasm to Open a New Renaissance in Juche Arts and Literature," *Rodong Sinmun*, January 28, 2021.

demanding arts and literature to fulfill its ‘sacred duty’ as the trumpeter of the Party by creating “masterpieces that substitute ten thousand guns and swords, and make the blood running in ten thousand hearts boil”¹⁰⁾ to at least achieve the goals set at the 8th Party Congress of the WPK and the 4th Plenary Meeting of the 8th Term of the Central Committee.

Digital Film Trademark and Thriller-Style Trailers

‘Newly created film trademarks’ refer to the brand logos of film producers. Since the 1960s, the Chosun Arts Film Studio and the Chosun April 25 Arts Film Studio, both with Mount Paektu in the background, has each used the *Chollima* bronze statue and the statue of a peasant-soldier-worker trio as its logo, respectively. After the logo is shown on a screen, the phrase ‘Chosun Film’ appears in brush writing with no sound effects before the actual film begins. This sequence is called a leader film and acts as the face of the film producer.

The leader film for <A Day and a Night> runs for about 15 seconds. In the trailer, the peasant-soldier-worker trio statue logo for the Chosun April 25th Arts Film Studio has been digitized. Similar to the ‘20th Century Studios’ logo, lights are flashed from both sides while sound effect like the ‘20th Century Fox Fanfare’ has also been added. North Korea’s national flower ‘magnolia’ has been engraved on the rectangular base of the peasant-soldier-worker trio statue while the words ‘Chosun’ and ‘Film’ have been engraved on each side. The ‘film trademark,’ visualized through 3D digital imaging, heightens the ‘Chosun Film’ brand by adding lights and fanfare.

The trailer that runs for about a minute begins by introducing the two male and female main characters with the time slice method used to illustrate subjects with still frames. The narrator describes how ‘a day and a night of stern class struggle determined by blood’ will unfold centered around the female main character ‘Ra

10) “Only Hearts that beat to the Ideology of the Party and Enthusiastically Accept Reality can Create Masterpieces,” *Rodong Sinmun*, January 15, 2022.

Myong-ju’ whom ‘begins a new life full of delight and energy.’ The trailer is edited in a way that makes a strong impression and arouses the curiosity of the audience by using the contrast between stillness and motion, light and darkness, and light background music and suspenseful sound effects. Peeking through holes and overhearing conversations through windows resembles surveillance activities. Auditory cues including sound effects that foreshadow incidents, the sound of someone jumping into water, and sounds of explosions and gunfire further add to the tension. Moreover, a car racing through the dark and scenes of dizzying headlights indicate a chase scene.

A news report describes how <A Day and a Night> “shows the characteristics of a performative artform with an experimental adoption of a plot that overturns expectations and with a dynamic turn of events that captivate hearts and minds, increases the attraction of the movie to intrigue the audience with tension through various twists and turns,” and “exposes the conspiracies of ‘anti-Party, counter-revolutionary factionalists.’”¹¹⁾ This shows that the movie is not only a mystery-type thriller that investigates and reveals the crimes of ‘anti-Party, counter-revolutionary factionalists’ but also is belongs to the ‘spy/anti-espionage genre’ unique to North Korea.¹²⁾

11) “Preview of the New Art Film <A Day and a Night>,” *Rodong Sinmun*, April 10, 2022.

12) The ‘spy genre’ depicts spying activities to extract secret data and information by the main character while the ‘anti-espionage genre’ focuses on exposing spies from enemy states that have infiltrated North Korea. Usually, the main character in the spy genre are North Korean operatives, while security officers are featured in the anti-espionage genre. The drama titled <The Diary of a Security Worker> which aired on Korean Central TV in 1999 is a classic of the anti-espionage genre. Meanwhile, the popular drama, <Bulletproof Wall>, which aired in 2015 can be considered as in the spy genre.

When the narration ends by announcing that the movie will be released in movie theatres and cultural houses nationwide on the Day of the Sun, the screen zooms in on Myong-ju, the female main character whiling showing the title of the movie, <A Day and a Night>. Though these motion graphics are rudimentary, it is impressive how the scene attempted kinetic typography to depict ‘moving text.’

Theme and Subject as Criteria for Masterpieces

This spy/anti-espionage genre in which spies and security officers play the role of detectives is popular among North Korean films. In these films that depict the political and military struggle against invading imperialist forces as well as class enemies of the revolution,¹³⁾ the adversary is usually in foreign countries such as the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. <Bulletproof Wall> (2015), which followed this formula of the genre, is a drama that illustrates the successes of a North Korean spy who became a ‘bulletproof wall’ for the ‘command center of the revolution’ against Japan and its efforts to destroy it. The various twists and turns that took many by surprise became extremely popular among the people of North Korea. The success of <Bulletproof Wall> and its theme of protecting the leader unto death demonstrated that a genre that combines the mystery and thriller genres could be both entertaining and captivating to effectively deliver the message of “winning the fierce class struggle against enemies.”¹⁴⁾ Meanwhile, the villains in <A Day and

13) Chul-min Pak, “Detective Stories and the Implementation of the Party’s Anti-class Line,” *Chosun Art*, January 2016, p. 72. (in Korean)

14) Hyuk Myong, “The Intellect of Detective Films and the Art of Visualizing Villains,” *Chosun Art*, August 2016, p. 64. (in Korean)

a Night> are “political schemers which betray the revolution that have different visions and secret ambitions while feigning to follow orders.”¹⁵⁾ ‘Schemers’ and ‘betrayers’ that exist within the Party are essentially the anti-Party, counter-revolutionary factionalists that threaten the safety of the state.

The main character ‘Ra Myong-ju’ is based on a hero of the republic and veteran of war ‘Ra Myong-hui.’ Through the process of finding and organizing the combat merits of veterans as part of the commemorative project celebrating the 60th anniversary of war victory in 2013, Ra Myong-hui earned the title of war hero and received both the Gold Star medal and First Rank of the Order of the National Flag (Kukki Hunjang). News reports on Ra Myong-hui published in 2021 reveal the general story of <A Day and a Night>.

In 1958, two years after the plenary meeting held in August 1956, Ra Myong-hui, was a nurse stationed at the clinic of the railway corp command post famous for administering injections. As she visited the homes of high-ranking officials in the military for their injections, Ra Myong-hui learned how they were conspiring to commit ‘serious criminal acts’ by ridiculing the ideology and political line of the Party as well as enjoying a corrupt lifestyle by socializing with sycophants. Despite threats at gunpoint and violence, Ra Myong-hui remained faithful to her convictions and exposed their corruption by writing a letter to Kim Il-sung. News reports of her heroism exposing the ‘conspiracies of anti-Party, counter-revolutionary factionalists’ explained that while Ra Myong-hui was an ordinary and everyday

15) “Preview of the New Art Film <A Day and a Night>,” *Rodong Sinmun*, April 10, 2022.

woman that did not stand out in her everyday life, her loyalty to the leader flamed like a volcano. And Kim Jong-un's words that glorified veterans of the war as predecessors of the revolution and national treasures, as well as his praise for the heroic acts of Ra Myong-hui protecting the leader unto death, was transformed into the theme and subject of the art film <A Day and a Night>.¹⁶⁾ The year 1958 in which the movie is based closely overlaps with 2022 and has political symbolism that requires a more detailed analysis.

Political Symbolism of the Year '1958'

The phrase "Let us glamorously construct the city of heroes Pyongyang!" that appeared in the trailer of <A Day and a Night> shows that the film is based in 1958 during which the general plan for the construction of Pyongyang was established. The accomplishments of Ra Myong-hui are also related to the sectarian struggle that occurred in 1958. The background of the movie and the actual character of Ra Myong-hui symbolizes both the external and internal difficulties that North Korea faces in 2022 and the solution to these problems. This can be explained in more detail as follows.

First, 1958 and 2022 overlap as 'ten year anniversaries.' 1958 was the tenth year since the foundation of the North Korean regime and the year in which the socialist transformation was completed. As the tenth year of the Kim Jong-un regime as well as the year of 'comprehensive socialist development,' 2022 is an optimal year to organize and show off the regime's accomplishments so far. Recently, the *Rodong*

16) "The Warrior that Protected the Leader unto Death whom Lives Eternally in the Embrace of Our Party," *Rodong Sinmun*, April 27, 2021.

Sinmun has frequently mentioned the ‘*Chollima* miracle’ accomplished in 1958.¹⁷⁾ The implication is that similar to how “our Republic achieved levels of development incomparable to a decade ago on the tenth year since the foundation of the Republic,”¹⁸⁾ the industrial achievements of domestic production, modernization, and globalization accomplished over the past ten years of the Kim Jong-un regime is equal to that of the ‘*Chollima* miracle.’ In addition, it reveals the intent to achieve a balanced and ‘comprehensive development’ across all sectors.

Second, the comparison seeks to continue the legacy and tradition of self-reliance. The “astounding miracles” achieved in 1958 rhetorically ask the following questions; “What challenges are impossible to overcome and which victories are unobtainable if we live and struggle with the fighting spirit of the post-war reconstruction period and of the heroes of the *Chollima* era? The difficulties we face today are undoubtedly harsh, but is it more difficult than back then when we needed to raise ourselves back up from the ashes?¹⁹⁾ This is the lesson from the past for today.” The 1970s which the Kim Jong-un regime referred to as an example in the early days of its leadership was belle époque when everything was in its prime and beautiful. The slogan for construction and struggle like the 1970s has lost momentum in the current environment where “everything is difficult and lacking.”²⁰⁾ In contrast, North Korea achieved the complete transformation to socialism and the *Chollima* miracle in 1958 amidst the Sino-Soviet split and the line of self-reliance

17) According to news articles in the *Rodong Sinmun*, examples of the *Chollima* miracle in 1958 include the following: the ‘*Chollima* tractor’ in Kiyang, the ‘Victory-58-type freight truck’ in Tokchon, the ‘*Chollima* excavator’ in Rakwon, and the ‘Red star-58 bulldozer’ developed in Bookchong. Moreover, examples of *Chollima* miracle also include the accomplishments such as the 75-day completion of the ‘Haeju-Hasung’ railroad that was initially expected to take three to four years, the Kanggye youth power factory, increased production of coal, construction of housing for 20,000 households, and the unprecedented record of crop yields.

18) Keum-sung Kang, “The Noble Tradition of Patriotism,” *Rodong Sinmun*, September 1, 2021.

19) Sung-hwa Pang, “Our Party Demands that We Live and Struggle with the Spirit of Heroic Eras,” *Rodong Sinmun*, April 23, 2021.

20) Eun-il Han, “The Revolutionary View of the Leader is the Fundamental Core of the Ideological and Mental Characteristic of Revolutionaries,” *Rodong Sinmun*, April 25, 2022.

externally as well as domestic power struggles internally. Sanctions against North Korea and the COVID-19 pandemic have fostered a war-like crisis. From this perspective, North Korea seeks to convey a message of overcoming current obstacles by remembering the legacy and tradition of self-reliance of 1958.

Third, it is to make present the theme of ‘protecting the leader unto death’ from <A Day and a Night>. The heroic nature of protecting the leader unto death exhibited by Ra Myong-hui is projected onto Kim Jong-un.²¹⁾ The ‘contemporary theme’ of the Kim Jong-un era is the Jang Song-thaek incident in 2013.²²⁾ The year 1958 referred to in the movie signals that the solution to current problems lies in the ‘desperate spirit of achieving’ of the policies and direction of the Party. Individuals or groups that oppose these lines become ‘anti-party, anti-revolution groups.’ In addition, repeating a similar miracle to the one achieved in 1958 requires following Kim Jong-un and maintaining faith which, in turn, means the ‘Desperate Spirit of Safeguarding the Leader.’

<A Day and a Night> is hoped to “further instill the revolutionary view of the leader among officials, party members, and workers that seek to implement the decisions made at the 8th Party Congress of the WPK and the 4th Plenary Meeting of the 8th Term of the Central Committee, and to also actively contribute to fostering the cultural and emotional sentiment of our people.”²³⁾ The notion is that

21) Hak-chul Kim, “The Beginning and the End of the Life of a Revolutionary Must be the Same,” *Rodong Sinmun*, August 14, 2021.

22) Part 1 of the documentary film titled <The Everlasting Path of Solidarity> which aired on Korean Central TV on April 4-8, 2022 records the accomplishments of the 10 years of the Kim Jong-un regime. This film mentions the Jang Song-thaek incident in 2013 as a ‘historical achievement’ as an ‘elimination of modern day sectarian element’ for the consolidation of the monolithic ruling system by Kim Jong-un. “North Korea selects ‘execution of Jang Song-thaek’ as the major achievement at the 10th Anniversary of the Kim Jong-un Regime,” *Yonhap News*, April 8, 2022, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20220408062900504> (Accessed April 20, 2022). (in Korean)

23) “Preview of the New Art Film <A Day and a Night>,” *Rodong Sinmun*, April 10, 2022.

strengthening the Desperate Spirit of Safeguarding the Leader is necessary to respond to sanctions, withstand current internal difficulties that are similar to the post-war era, and repeat the miracle from the *Chollima* period in a self-reliant manner. In sum, <A Day and a Night> projects the situation in 1958 to 2022 and compares the accomplishments of the 10 years of the Kim Jong-un regime to the *Chollima* miracle to urge overcoming today's difficulties by continuing the legacy and tradition of self-reliance. It also embodies the message of elevating Kim Jong-un to the status of leader and the Desperate Spirit of Safeguarding the Leader.

Sociocultural Meaning of <A Day and a Night>

The film not only has political symbolism but also is entertaining and interesting. Furthermore, the following sociocultural implications are noteworthy.

First, <A Day and a Night> fulfills the public's demand for cultural consumption. The crackdown and punishment on foreign culture have been strengthened since the Reactionary Ideology and Culture Rejection Law was passed in December 2020. The tastes and preferences of the North Korean people have changed and their ideological attachments have weakened as they have grown accustomed to various video materials that display foreign culture. Thus, it became a top priority to produce "a film that the people enjoy and need" in order to satisfy the cultural demands of the public while social control and social ideology is strengthened.²⁴⁾ A modern film that reflected changing times produced by 'fundamentally

24) Su-jeong Ri, "Let Us Create a Masterpiece that the Times Demand and the People Await," *Rodong Sinmun*, November 13, 2021.

eliminating' past formulas and rigidity can be considered a strategy to not only fulfill the cultural needs of the public but also convince them to contribute to the revolution and construction.

Second, the film establishes the brand value of 'Chosun Film.' <A Day and a Night> digitalized the logo of the film producer, created a leader film that resembles global styles, and visualized the title of the movie, which was once written in brush writing, with basic motion graphics. The trailer released on TV can be viewed as marketing for 'Chosun Film.' Overall, such advertisement can be considered as an attempt to establish the brand value of North Korean films.

Third, the movie seeks to restore order by eliminating factors that threaten the community. The main character's process of tracking down crime and solving the case demonstrates how society can be returned to 'nomality' by eradicating the possibility of threats.²⁵⁾ In other words, the plot of the movie that features enemies from within that threaten the system is a projection of latent risks, social anxiety, and fear that exist in today's North Korean society. As the Desperate Spirit of Safeguarding the Leader solved problems and achieved miracles back in 1958, the meaning of the movie is to emotionally persuade the public to carry the Desperate Spirit of Safeguarding the Leader to overcome current difficulties that the country faces in 2022.

Outlook: Overlap between the Background of the Movie and Today

The art film <A Day and a Night> was announced as the first masterpiece in six

25) Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, translated by So-yeon Kim and Jae-hee Yoo (Seoul: Visualization and Language, 1995), p. 123.

years that breaks a long hiatus to be released in 2022 which is the 110th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il-sung and the 80th anniversary of the birth of Kim Jong-il. While the common but refreshing format of the movie may be a reason why it is a ‘masterpiece,’ the more important factor is its underlying themes of the Desperate Spirit of Safeguarding the Leader and class struggle. Noteworthy about <A Day and a Night> is the contemporary meaning of 1958 on which the movie is based.

The year 1958, which the North Korean media has recently mentioned in reference to the legacy and tradition of self-reliance, was the 10th anniversary of the foundation of North Korea. 2022 is the 10th anniversary of the Kim Jong-un regime. Both the sectarian struggle and *Chollima* miracle experienced in 1958 overlap with the internal strife and accomplishments of the first decade of the Kim Jong-un regime. By equating its past and present, North Korea believes that current difficulties can be overcome by enduring internal challenges like the post-war period and ideologically harboring the Desperate Spirit of Safeguarding the Leader. Persistent sanctions imposed on North Korea and a strained economy may foment instability of the system and social unrest. An ideological mentality is needed as the ‘weapon for absolute victory’ necessary to repeat the ‘miracle of rebuilding the nation from ashes’ achieved in 1958 under today’s difficult circumstances. At its core lies the Desperate Spirit of Safeguarding the Leader. This notion establishes the ideological foundation for the idea of comprehensive socialist development.

Despite such political symbolism, the trailer for <A Day and a Night> reveals a narrative that closely resembles a thriller which is both entertaining and captivating. In addition, the digitalized film producer logo, stylish editing of the trailer, and movie title visualized with moving text demonstrate how the film has incorporated the general style of commercial movies. To say the least, this is the process necessary for the culture industry to become competitive and a step for ‘Chosun Film’ to

establish its brand value.

Referring to the year 1958 is expected to replace the ‘style of the 1970s’ which had driven social construction early in the Kim Jong-un regime. If the 1970s was a period during which North Korea achieved its prime in every area including politics, the economy, society, and the military, 1958 can be used to tell the story of overcoming challenging and daunting times. One can understand how Kim Jong-un’s authority as the leader has been consolidated by observing how an epic based on the context of 1958 is illustrated. ©KINU 2022

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