

"Doggy Poo": The Weirdest Korean Movie I've Ever Reviewed

Is it an allegory for the Miracle on the Hangang River, where citizens were sacrificed for the greater good of the country?



K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM

SEP 05, 2025



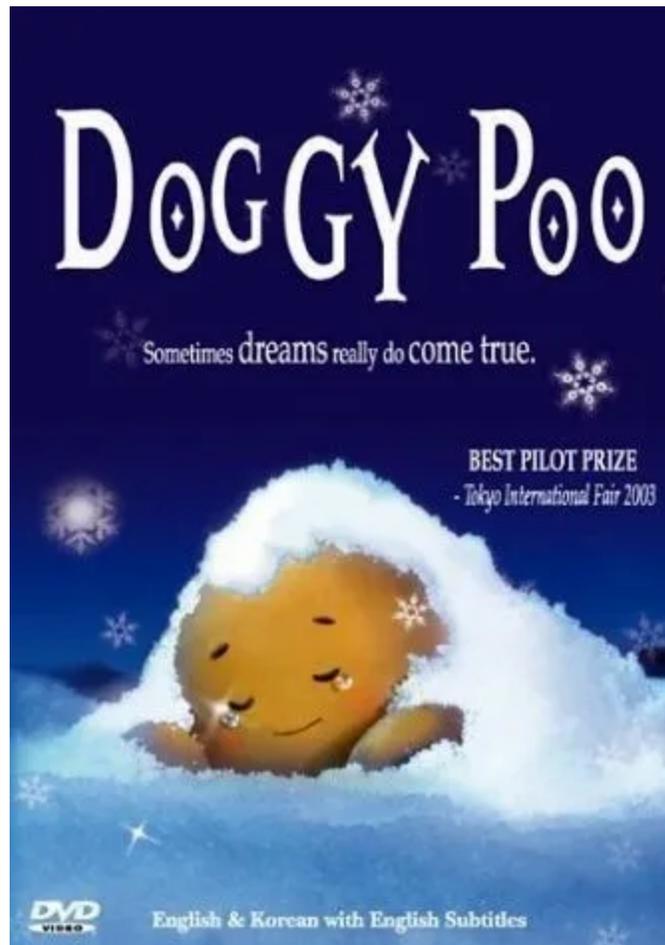
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"강아지 똥"

☆☆ (out of ☆☆☆☆)

(ㅋㅋ Or maybe it should be 🐞 🐞)

True story. When this DVD came out in 2004, one of my editors left it on my desk because (a) it's Korean and (b) she knew how much I despised stepping in dog excrement.

I didn't watch this until years later, with my (then) toddler, who was in the process of potty-training.

The short stop-motion animated film starts off with a little dog who poops on the road, giving "birth" to our hero. The little pile of poop is looked down upon by everyone, even a parade of chickens looking for something delicious to eat.

Stinky, unwanted and alone in the world, Doggy Poo longs to find purpose in life.

Doggy Poo: I become a flower?!



One day, he meets a kind sprout that says she values him and really needs him to survive (as fertilizer). If he gives himself to her, they can unite to become a flower as beautiful as the nightly stars that he admires.

Although I know that's how fertilizer works, that segment rang kind of cultish to me.

The 30-minute film was directed by Kwon Oh-sung and is based on Kwon Jung-saeng's 1968 children's book of the same name. During that time period, South Korea was still in the process of recovering from the Korean War, and was decades away from becoming the high-tech, wealthy *K-country* it is today.

In 1961, South Korean prime minister Chang Myon looked to West Germany's postwar economic growth — known as the *Miracle on the Rhine* — as a model for South Korea's recovery. “We should have the austerity and diligence compared to that of the Germans,” he said in his New Year's speech.

I can't help but wonder if Kwon's book wasn't an allegory for how Korean citizens were encouraged to sacrifice themselves — with relentless hours spent studying at school and brutal work conditions — all for the *greater good* of a country that would use their back-breaking labor for the much-ballyhooed *Miracle on the Hangang River*, and then toss them aside when they were “useless.”

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, South Korea has had the worst elderly poverty among OECD countries since 2009. The poverty rate for Koreans aged 76 and older is a startling 52 percent.



Theatrical release: June 20, 2003 in South Korea.

Accolades: “Doggy Poo” won two awards — best pilot at the Tokyo International Anime Fair, and viewer's choice at the Big Apple Anime Fest).

Note: I watched this film on a DVD. You can find it on YouTube etc. However, since I was unable to find an official streaming site, I'm not linking to the ones mentioned

above. Honestly though, if you never watch this short movie, your life will won't be, ugh, *shitty*.

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