

MESSAGE



*H.E. Hyuk Lee
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of the
Republic of Korea to the Republic of
the Philippines*

Dr. John Paul Vergara, Vice
President for Loyola Schools;

Dr. Oh Ingyu, Director for General
Affairs of the World Association
for Hallyu Studies;

Esteemed panelists;

Officials and faculty members of the Ateneo;

Dear students;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning.

I am delighted to be here today and be a part of this conference that will pave the way for a more comprehensive course on Korean Studies. It is a distinct honor to belong to this esteemed institution that has been providing quality education and producing leaders for over 150 years.

The fact that experts have converged here is a testament to the growing interest in Hallyu, a subject that is close to my heart. I have often articulated my observation that the Korean Wave is washing into the shores of many countries. However, it has actually reached the Philippines way ahead of the others, which is not surprising considering how bilateral relations between our countries began.

In large part, the strong bonds that tie our two nations is due to a shared history, which, as most of you know, started with the Korean War and the way the Philippines supported our cause. The bravery and selflessness of what came to be known as the "Fighting Filipinos" contributed to the recovery of the Republic of Korea and its emergence as one of the more successful economies in Asia today.

I would venture to say that Hallyu has opened up Korea and allowed the rest of the world to peer into its cultural heart. I am happy to see that the Philippines, in particular, has been very receptive to our brand of art, film, music, fashion, and cuisine.

It is interesting, the way Filipinos have embraced our Korean novels and K-Pop, so I went to see the Korean all-female band 2NE1 when they performed here last month. It may be self-serving to say, but I think they are really fine entertainers, especially Sandara Park – who now calls herself simply as Dara. It is a tribute to the Philippines that she found and honed her talents right here where she started her career.

This conference offers the perfect venue to discover what other factors may be playing a part in the growing interest in Korean culture. With discovery comes a deeper understanding of people's perceptions. I see only good things coming out of this event.

In closing, I would like to thank and congratulate the Ateneo de Manila University, particularly the Ateneo Initiative for Korean Studies, for hosting this conference. I hope those who are in attendance will greatly benefit from today's discussions.

Gamsahamnida!