



Overseas compatriots at forefront of unleashing Korean Wave

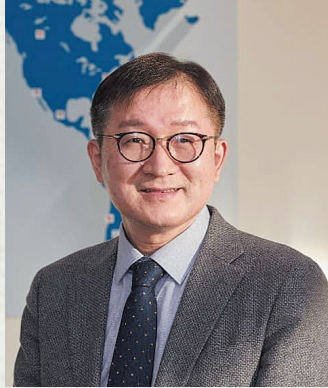
Is the Korean Wave an industry, a culture or an emotion? Today's Hallyu, which has expanded beyond K-pop and drama, K-food and K-beauty to include K-culture and K-lifestyle, is not just driven by national brand strategies or technology. First and foremost, there is K-content based on the creativity and diversity of its creators and producers, and behind it is the global Korean community, who are the voluntary evangelists of the Korean Wave.

Just look at Sao Paulo, Brazil, where I was a correspondent for three years. The Korean community of Bom Retiro was declared a Koreatown by the city in 2010. Since then, it has expanded into a space that reinforces the Korean identity, from sculptures like "Uri" to the naming of a street as Prates-Corea in Bom Retiro. Behind the spread of the Korean Wave are the collaborative efforts and power of organizations like the Korean Town Development Committee.

Korean restaurants are thriving in Bom Retiro. Once a place where Korean emigrants and dispatched workers were the main customers, the number of Brazilian locals has increased. According to a KOTRA survey, 87.9 percent of locals who visited Korean restaurants said they were influenced by K-pop and K-dramas. The Korean Wave has expanded to include K-food and Korean language learning. In 2013, a Korean language department was opened at Sao Paulo State University. The subsequent establishment of the Korean Cultural Center and the Sejong Institute are the result of the efforts of the Korean Embassy and the Korean community.

The "Dream Concert," which was held for compatriot youth, was opened to all nationalities as a "K-pop cover dance contest" at the strong request of Brazilian youth. Events, such as the "Gangnam Style" flash mob and the "K-pop Invasion" organized by local cultural organizations, demonstrated the growing popularity of the Korean Wave in Brazil. K-pop has become an attractive "peer culture" among Brazilian youth, and our compatriots have become "K-culture evangelists." In this atmosphere, BTS held four concerts in Brazil.

Indeed, the role of overseas Koreans is important. According to the Overseas Koreans Agency, overseas Koreans contribute to building friendship and cooperation between their home and



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resident countries in the political and diplomatic fields. Their increase in political power also expands the influence of Koreans and represents Korea's national interests. In the economic field, the economic activities of overseas Koreans ("hansang") have the effect of expanding the economic territory of the country. They contribute to domestic investment, remittances and job creation, and they also play a leading role in exporting Korean products.

In particular, in the field of culture, overseas Koreans contribute to building friendship and cooperation between their own countries and homeland, and serve as a medium for spreading the Korean Wave. Cultural events organized by Korean communities around the world are effective in promoting Korea and are a public

diplomacy asset for enhancing the country's image. The Korean Culture Day organized by the Brazilian Association of Koreans is a typical example. In addition, for our children's generation, the Korean Wave will allow them to discover the "Korea in ourselves." The Korean diaspora is driving the expansion and localization of the Korean Wave.

In fact, in Sao Paulo, some Koreans have started K-content businesses, while others have been promoting K-food and even opened Korean restaurants. There are also many volunteers who teach Korean to locals. In this way, the Korean Wave lives and breathes with overseas Koreans. It is not something that exists outside of borders, but rather it is a cultural companion beyond borders. The sustainability of the Korean Wave comes from the empathy and solidarity of people who love and practice Korea around the world. These currents continue to flow today.

There are tasks that need to be accomplished to further revitalize the Korean Wave. In addition to overseas missions, KOTRA, the Korean Cultural Center, the Sejong Institute, the Korea Tourism Organization, the Korea Creative Content Agency, etc., should establish a close cooperation system with each other. A control tower is needed. The Korean Wave is no longer a one-way street but a "culture of co-creation" with the local community, which requires systematic content exchanges, programs for youth and the fostering of the next generation of leaders. 🇰🇷