

Regular Column written by Itaru Ishii at Kushiro News, Japan, on 29<sup>th</sup> JAN 2012

## Title : “The real international stateman – Hon. Jose De Venecia”

On the last Christmas Day, I was in Manila, Philippines. It was because I was invited by Hon. Jose De Venecia, who has been the Speaker of the Representatives in Philippines for 5 terms, ran for the president before, and had been the secretary-general of Lakas-CMD party for a long time, to attend his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday party.

The relationship with him is for a long time. Originally a free journalist Mr. Kiyoshi Wakamiya introduced him to me about 15 years ago. Mr. Wakamiya is a very unique person. In 1983, when Mr. Wakamiya was a private secretary to Mr. Ninoy Aquino, who is the father of the current president of Philippines, Noynoy Aquino., Ninoy was shot by a soldier, when he landed at the airport in Manila. Mr. Wakamiya is famous to be a man with him at the time.

In 2010, I made an interview with Mr. De Venecia for my book and my TV program related to global economy. And in the next year, I took my mother, living at Sapporo city, to him house.

Mr. De Venecia is very different from the other normal statesmen. His activity range is not within Philippines. For example, he founded an international organization named ICAPP, the International Conference of Asian Political Parties, in 2000. This is a very unique forum, where over 300 political parties, not only the governing parties but also the opposition parties, from 52 countries attend it. From Japan, people from DPJ, LDP, New Komeito Party, Social Democratic Party, Communist Party have attended. Now in many countries, the governments are changing. It is important to communicate with not only the governing parties but also the opposition parties. Mr. De Venecia looks to know it from a long ago, looking at this ICAPP. Also he contacts the leaders all over the world from his mobile phone directly.

Over 700 people attended his birthday party. From Asia, Hon. Mushahid, the former presidential candidate of Pakistan, Hon. Sok An, the vice prime minister of Cambodia, Hon. Nepal, the former Prime Minister of Nepal, attended. We had senior statesman even from Azerbaijan, Mexico, to celebrate his birthday.

I felt a kind of complex feeling, because we do not have such a statesman. We should have at least one statesman in Japan, who is very international and respected by people around the world, like Mr. De Venecia.

Translated by Itaru Ishii