

# An Introduction to Contemporary Japanese Politics (1) Political Parties

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I expect this article will be of some use to young researchers and students who cannot read Japanese language texts, but who intend to study Japanese politics. It should also be useful for Japanese students who want to discuss the topic in English while studying with non-Japanese friends, either in Japanese institutions or abroad. It should also serve as a useful introduction to the relevant literature in the English language for young researchers.

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1 *outline*

(1) *main parties*

Japan has five major parties. This at least was the case in October 1992 when this article was being written. No one can say however that there is no possibility of a party realignment in the near future. This possibility will be discussed later. In considering the possibility of a future realignment, we must first understand the present situation of the five major parties.

- |   |   |           |
|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | the Liberal Democratic Party                  | LDP       |
|   | Jiyū-minshu-tō 自由民主党 Jimintō 自民党 Jimin 自民     |           |
| 2 | the Social Democratic Party of Japan          | SDPJ      |
|   | (also known as the Japan Socialist Party JSP) |           |
|   | Nihon-shakai-tō 日本社会党 Shakaitō 社会党 Shakai 社会  |           |
| 3 | Kōmeitō or the Kōmei Party                    |           |
|   | (also known as the Clean Government Party)    |           |
|   | Kōmeitō 公明党                                   | Komei 公明  |
| 4 | the Japan Communist Party                     | JCP       |
|   | Nihon-Kyōsan-tō 日本共産党 Kyōsan-tō 共産党 Kyōsan 共産 |           |
| 5 | the Democratic Socialist Party                | DSP       |
|   | Minsha-tō 民社党                                 | Minsha 民社 |

*The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)*

The LDP was founded in 1955. The several conservative parties which existed prior to this merged into the LDP just ten years after the conclusion of World War Two. At this time Japanese

post-war reconstruction was almost complete. Japanese society was moving towards stability and economic growth after the tumultuous chaos which followed defeat in the war.

The LDP is a conservative party. Fundamentally it supports a free market economy. However it is not clear that Japan actually has a free market economy. It is sometimes said that a kind of state capitalism has operated in Japan since the Meiji Restoration. The LDP does not believe in minimal or negative government. But it has never been a socialist government and it has consistently opposed communism.

The LDP has been the government party since its establishment in 1955. It seems to have received the support, albeit sometimes only reluctantly, of people who have no desire for radical change. Consecutive Presidents of the LDP have thus become Prime Ministers, and the LDP remains the most important actor in Japanese politics.

However the LDP is not an organized party. It is a kind of coalition party consisting of factions. We could say that the LDP is a mosaic. As of October 1992 there were five major factions. Although the possibility of faction realignment must be kept in mind, it is clear that an understanding of these five factions is a prerequisite for our comprehension of past, present and especially future options for Japanese political life. It is these currently existing factions which will form the basis for any new factions which may be created in the future. Through them we are able to study the form and functions of a faction.

#### *The Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ)*

The SDPJ was founded in 1945. But at that time it was known as the Japan Socialist Party (JSP). It was established by thou-

sands of politicians and activists directly after the conclusion of World War Two. It was a symbol of postwar democracy and peace. Socialism had been thoroughly suppressed by the military government during the war. Irrespective of what its real character may have been, the SDPJ was popularly perceived to be a party of peace and democracy. In other words, the voting public did not necessarily support it as a socialist party.

The SDPJ was reunited in 1955 after a four year split. This was the year the LDP was established, following the merger of conservative parties. From this time on, the SDPJ has maintained its position as the party with the second largest following after the LDP. In other words, it has to date always been an opposition party, and is surely the most wellknown source of political opposition in Japan.

The core of its support lies in the trade unions, with the main stream of the Japanese labour movement consistently offering its loyalty. Prior to and especially during the war the working class movement had been oppressed violently. The revival of the trade unions was thus also symbolic of the new postwar democracy.

The several parties and trade union organizations which exist in Japan have been affected by each other. Nevertheless it is unclear how the political spectrum will change in the future. The SDPJ also has several factions. Broadly speaking it has a right wing and a left wing. Intraparty politics within the SDPJ is factional politics.

#### *Kōmei Party*

Kōmeitō was founded in 1964. It is well known that Kōmeitō is in effect the political wing of Sōka-Gakkai. Sōka-Gakkai made

Kōmeitō its formal political or electoral department in 1964. Sōka-Gakkai is the largest new religion to have risen in Japan. Kōmeitō is thus a kind of religious party. In political orientation it is a middle of the road party. Politically it has swayed between being pro-LDP and pro-SDPJ. In a sense Kōmeitō is opportunistic. However it is persistently anti-communist.

Kōmeitō seems to have entered a time of crisis. Sōka-Gakkai has kept itself aloof from other sections of society. The future of Sōka-Gakkai is unstable. For this reason Kōmeitō's future prospects are not bright.

*The Japan Communist Party (JCP)*

The JCP was founded in 1922. It is, in a sense, a by-product of the Russian Revolution. The leaders of the JCP were bloodily suppressed during the war. They were rehabilitated by the occupation forces of the United States and the JCP was rebuilt in 1945. The JCP is anti-capitalist and, also anti-American. Strictly speaking it is the sole opposition party in Japan.

Needless to say the JCP is looked upon as an irreconcilable enemy by the financial world and the LDP. The JCP stands aloof even from the other opposition parties. The vigorous activities of the JCP are further evidence of Japan's postwar democracy and political freedom. At present the party's prospects are rather dark given the bankruptcy of East European and Soviet communism.

*The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP)*

The DSP was founded in 1964. It was founded by a splinter group from the SDPJ, a right wing faction. The DSP's founders were moderate social democrats, and it is one of the middle of the road parties in Japan. Unlike Kōmeitō, the DSP's main

supporters are those trade unions which promote cooperation between labour and management. As mentioned earlier the main stream of the Japanese labour movement has supported the SDPJ. The anti-main stream right wing of the Japanese labour movement has supported the DSP, while the left wing supports the JCP. The future of the DSP also does not seem bright in the present social environment. Indeed it may even be absorbed once again into the SDPJ. In such a case the former DSP will likely continue to exist as a faction.

(2) *The Party System*

*A multi-party system?*

These five major parties are active in present day Japan. However there are also a number of minor parties. The Japanese party system appears to be a multi-party system. But multi-party systems usually involve periodic transfers of power. It is these transfers of power which demonstrate to us the existence of democracy. But Japan has never experienced such a change after the conservative merger. Except for a short period during the chaotic years directly after the war, the conservatives have long been dominant.

Taking into account this perspective of long term LDP government the Japanese party system may be a kind of one party system. It is not however, an institutional one party system like that of the former Soviet Union.

(3) *the characteristics of Japanese parties and the party system*

The LDP's long term in government is very unusual for a developed country. The LDP has governed for 37 years. Only the Swedish Social Democratic Party government has been in power for a similar term.

Nevertheless, Japan has actually experienced a certain kind of power transfer. The factions have held office in rotation. Factional politics is a fundamental characteristic of the LDP and therefore of Japanese politics. It may be said that Italian politics is similar in this respect.

Japanese politics is often said to be a premodern form of politics. Neither the LDP nor the SDPJ are organized parties. Both appear to be premodern parties. Factional politics and factions based on human relationships are rooted deeply in Japanese society. Dependency, in Japanese “amae”, has been described as a feature of Japanese culture. Neither the LDP nor the SDPJ are independent entities but depend heavily on other organizations.

The LDP and the SDPJ provide the framework of Japanese politics. Thus it appears that it is a two-party system. But the LDP has continued to remain the government. Also the SDPJ has been and is only half the size of the LDP. The phrase “one and a half party system” has often been used. This system, characterized by one party of government, chronic corruption and opposition only for the sake of opposition, may not necessarily be for the good of the Japanese. But it seems to have made stable economic growth possible. What is the relationship between the Japanese economy and political stability and corruption?

## 2 *the LDP*

### (1) *History*

#### *Prehistory*

Japan had a quasi two-party system before the Second World

War. It was made up of the Seiyūkai and the Minseitō. Both were conservative and very much alike. Neither ever governed, strictly speaking. Political power was held by the emperor, at least nominally. Substantial power was held by the senior bureaucrats and the military. These parties never behaved like opposition parties. They did not fight against the establishment. They were always compromised and enthusiastically sought after unfair profit.

These features are also evident among post-war conservative politicians. Even now, many are less eager to govern than to collect political funds or to make themselves rich.

#### *The Conservative Merger*

Soon after World War Two, in particular from autumn to winter 1945, several conservative parties were established. During the war all parties were compelled to dissolve and then disappeared. The Diet itself had long been closed. These new post war parties were the Liberal Party (Jiyūtō), the Japan Progressive Party (Nippon-Kaisin-tō) and the Japan Cooperative Party (Nippon-Kyōdō-tō). Among them the Liberal Party was the most powerful. Its leaders and their successors made themselves the main stream of Japanese political conservatism.

In the turmoil following the war, these conservative parties fought with each other and repeatedly joined and separated. Furthermore factional or personal struggles within the parties made the moves even more confusing. None of the parties were organized parties. In essence, they were factional gatherings, based primarily on human relationships.

In the ten years following the end of 1945, the Japanese economy recovered gradually and society became stable. The res-



toration or reorganization of the financial world was symbolic of this. Its leading figures desired to end conflict inside the conservative camp and to have one powerful party. One reason for this was that these leaders were unhappy that their money was being wasted. Another was that they felt threatened by the reunification of the Japan Socialist Party.

The conservative parties merged and formed themselves into a new party named "the liberal Democratic Party" in 1955. Outside pressure from the business leaders seemed to be a key factor in this merger. It seems that the Japanese political world is capable of almost no change without pressure from the outside.

#### *To the Present*

The LDP has been in power since 1955. Using a variety of means, it has continued to win general elections. The LDP leaders are certainly professionals in the art of winning elections, although they may not be statesmen. Factional quarrels are simply routine for the LDP. Compromise is all important.

In an exceptional case, several members left the LDP in 1976 and established a small new party, "the New Liberal Club" (Shin-Jiyū-Kurabu). This group criticized the LDP for its plutocracy and temporarily won the voters' favor. However, it soon faded away. Its demise came when it was absorbed back into the LDP in 1986. The former New Liberal Club politicians are now busily working in the LDP world of "money politics".

#### (2) *Structure*

##### *The President*

The highest officer of the LDP is the "President". To date, presidents of the LDP have become Prime Ministers. Generally speaking the President has decisive influence in the party.

The president is elected by voting or through negotiation. According to the current rule, all LDP Diet members have the right to run and vote in the Presidential elections. In actuality, only candidates endorsed by the various factions stand. Voting does not necessarily take place. The President is often elected through negotiations among the party leaders behind closed doors. The ordinary party members also possess the right to vote. But their votes are only taken into account in some cases and as an additional measure.

The LDP has amended the electoral rule in almost every election. Nobody can predict what further amendments will be made. The LDP has operated by these rules in principle, however in practice under the table deals are more important.

*Other Important Posts*

Only a little less important than the President are the so-called “Tō-San-Yaku”, namely the three senior officials of the LDP. They are the Secretary General, the Chairperson of the Policy Research Council and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The second most powerful position is that of the Secretary General. The position which is the third most powerful depends mainly on the people who occupy the posts. There are also other positions such as that of Vice President. The LDP also has many committees such as the Diet Affairs Committee.

However, the political strength of individual politicians does not necessarily depend on their formal posts, but rather on their status within their factions.

As for policy making, the so-called policy tribe (Zoku) is also an informal but powerful group. There are many kinds of policy tribes. For instance, some Diet members are members

of the construction policy tribe. They have special knowledge of administration concerned with the construction industry, and have long been involved in this field. The Diet Affairs policy tribe has a very important role in negotiations among the parties, especially behind the scenes.

#### *Local Organizations and Party Membership*

At the local level, the LDP has prefectural chapters and under them city, town and village branches. But they are either not very active or exist only nominally. The active and substantial party machine in each region is the support organization.

Party membership has always been over one million. But many members are reportedly enrolled only nominally. It is said that, in many cases, the factions or individual Diet members borrow people's names and pay their party fees.

#### (3) *Ideology*

##### *Conservatism*

The LDP is a conservative party. Although it does not have a systematic view of world, its fundamental ideology is conservatism. LDP politicians and their backers support Japanese traditional capitalism, not from conviction but from force of habit. The Liberal Democrats are also traditionalists. They often compel the people to show their respect for the Emperor, national anthem or the 'Hinomaru' — the flag which depicts the rising sun. Many of them visit the "Yasukuni-Shrine". But they do not tend to be pure idealists. It could be said that they like money a lot and it has been said that they worship Mammon. The LDP is commonly accused of this.

##### *Opportunism*

The Liberal Democrats have supported the reinforcement of

the Self-Defence Forces. Some of them have insisted on the revision of the Constitution to allow the establishment of a 'real' army. Rather than being nationalist, they are opportunistic. A lack of principle is a characteristic feature of the post war conservatives. It is well known that the conservatives, who had been shouting anti-American slogans at the top of their voices, transformed themselves instantly into diehard pro-Americans.

The cold war made such opportunism possible and was an historical situation of unexpected fortune for the Japanese. But it has been observed that the Americans do not fully trust them. No one can predict the future course of relations between Japan and the United States in the new circumstances following the end of the cold war. Although anti-communist, LDP politicians may be political businessmen who actually needed Soviet Communism.

#### *Liberalism?*

Judging from its name alone, the LDP seems to be a party of liberty and democracy. But the LDP is not an enthusiastic supporter of a free market economy. It likes to control and exploit enterprises. Neither is it a party of political liberals. If anything, it has been turning against freedom of expression, political thought and actions. It is also difficult to say that the LDP is a party of democrats. It shows little eagerness to pursue either political democracy or egalitarianism.

#### *(4) Supporters*

##### *Managers of Companies, Small and Large*

The Japanese economy is more or less based on the free market. Among the five main parties the LDP is the only one with a capitalist orientation. It is natural that many company

managers support the LDP. Large companies do so with financial donations. They also donate to the factions and/or to individual politicians. The Liberal Democrats depend heavily on big business for financial support. The Federation of Economic Organizations have gives about ten billion yen or more to LDP headquarters every year. The LDP does not have a financial base apart from the business community.

During election campaigns, many small and medium sized companies assist the LDP in canvassing voluntarily but sometimes reluctantly.

#### *Bureaucrats*

Senior civil servants, or more strictly speaking, people who have administrative positions in central or local government offices, also support the LDP. Because in principle they must be neutral, they do so inconspicuously. But their real feelings are well known.

Traditionally the bureaucrats have been a part of the power elite in Japan. It is to be expected that most of them back the LDP consciously or unconsciously. What is more, about one forth of LDP Diet members are ex-bureaucrats.

#### *Farmers and ex-Farmers*

The other stronghold of LDP support is in the rural sector. Strictly speaking, it is the former rural sector. Many farmers, farmers with side jobs and ex-farmers have supported the LDP up to the present. They are conservative in disposition and dislike socialism almost instinctively. Though the LDP has long reciprocated by offering them protection, in recent years outside pressure has left the government with little alternative but to condider opening the rice market. It is uncertain how the far-

mers will react to this in the future. In any case, the future of Japanese agriculture is unpromising. Almost all farmers are old and have few successors.

### *The Demographic Characteristics of the Supporters*

From the demographic point of view, LDP supporters are aged and long term residents of their regions. From the point of view of group membership, they are people who join agricultural cooperatives, commercial or trade associations, and/or neighborhood associations, not just in name but on the basis of strong commitment.

From the regional point of view, they live in small cities, towns and villages or in rural areas. The LDP is not backed strongly by youth, the mobile or by residents of large cities.

## 3 *The Factions of the LDP*

### (1) *Origins*

#### *The Conservative Merger*

As mentioned earlier, the conservative parties merged in 1955. Yet they did not form an organized party. In actuality the new party, namely the LDP, is a federation of the parties or the political groups which existed before the merger. It may be said that they established a kind of coalition. The earlier parties became the factions of the LDP.

These factions continued to have their own organizations and political funds.

#### *The Power Struggle Between Yoshida and Hatoyama*

At present the LDP has five factions.

- 1 the Takeshita Faction←Tanake Faction←Satō Faction
- 3 the Miyazawa Faction←Suzuki Faction←Ōhira Faction←Ikeda

Faction

3 the Mitsuzuka Faction←Abe Faction←Fukuda Faction←Kishi Faction

4 the Watanabe Faction←Nakasone Faction←Kōno Faction

5 the Kōmoto Faction←Miki Faction

The first two factions are known as the main stream of LDP conservatism. The other three are known as the anti-main stream. The two streams originated from the power struggle between Shigeru Yoshida and Ichirō Hatoyama. Both were top leaders of the Liberal Party. So their struggle was a personal one, although there were also differences in their political stances. The power struggle within the LDP has been fundamentally a personal one since the establishment of the Party. Hayato Ikeda and Eisaku Satō were Yoshida loyalists. On the other hand Nobusuke Kishi, Ichirō Kōno and Takeo Miki supported Hatoyama. They reformed their political groups with their followers within the LDP and established their factions.

*Why have the LDP Factions Lasted So Long?*

It is difficult to answer this question. But we can find at least two reasons. One is the format of LDP presidential elections. They are held as a competition among the factions. I will review several elections in the last part of this section. The other is the several seats constituency system of the House of Representatives. For example, take the case of a five seats constituency: if the LDP has sufficient strength in the district, all five factions can promote their own candidates, compete with each other and win all the seats. In this way the party can retain total dominance.

(2) *Factions*

*What is a Faction? Takeshita's Case*

Former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita was a member of the prefectural assembly in his youth. He hoped to be a Diet member. With the patronage of a powerful landowner in a neighboring town he joined the Satō faction. With the recommendation of Satō he then ran for Lower House election on the LDP ticket. With the help of the Satō faction he won his first election.

As in the Takeshita case, a person who wants to stand on the LDP ticket usually joins a faction first. It is conventional that the LDP authorizes a candidate only when a faction recommends him or her to headquarters. The party will provide its backing. However it is not from the party itself, but from the faction that the candidate receives paternal assistance.

#### *A Party Within a Party?*

LDP factions are groups consisting of Diet members from several score to one hundred or more. But in some cases a faction indicates a group including former Diet members, would-be Diet members and so on. The LDP now has the five major factions mentioned earlier as well as other minor groups.

The faction is a kind of party. It is not an organized one but rather a peer group. It is so small that the members are, so to speak, like relatives to each other. On the one hand they are intimate, on the other hand they quarrel with each other. A seniority system operates according to the number of elections a member has survived on the basis of this system. Members will usually rise gradually through the factional ranks. In due course a senior member will be given a ministerial or party office.

#### *Human Relationship Factions*

The LDP's factions are based not on policies but on human



relationships. The relationship is basically one of leaders and followers, or patron and clients. The bosses provide their paternal assistance to their members and receive loyalty in return. The bosses offer a share of the political funds and award posts to their followers.

Although there is incessant quarreling among the factions, they unite when fighting enemies from outside the party.

*Daigishi-Keiretsu*

Individual LDP Diet members usually have many prefectural and municipal assembly members as followers. Their relationship is also a kind of patron-client one. Similarly, individual prefectural assembly members also often have municipal followers. Such a relation is called "Daigishi-Keiretsu". The Japanese word "Daigishi" means a member of the House of Representatives while "Keiretsu" means a series.

(3) *The Realities of Struggle*

*the Case of the 1972 Presidential Election*

Successive LDP presidents have emerged after factional struggles. In 1972, then Prime Minister Satō announced his resignation and intended to hand over his post to Takeo Fukuda, who belonged to the Kishi faction. But Kakuei Tanaka, who was the second most powerful man in the Satō faction, declared his candidacy against his master's will. About 80 percent of the faction formed themselves into a new faction under the leadership of Tanaka.

After the final round of voting Tanaka beat Fukuda with the support of other factions. It is said that the electoral results were produced mainly by vast amounts of money and the promises of ministerial or party posts, which made factional coali-

tion possible. The confrontation between Tanaka and Fukuda was the pivot of factional struggles for many years to come.

*The Case of the 1986 Presidential Election*

In the fall of 1986, the presidential term of Nakasone expired. Noboru Takeshita, Kiichi Miyazawa and one more candidate sought the top post. They were all leaders of their own factions. Without any voting taking place, Takeshita was elected as a result of negotiations among them and the support of Nakasone.

But the process was extremely unclear. It was a typical example of LDP, or more broadly speaking, Japanese decision making. Such decisions are often made behind the scenes and the process is not open to observation.

*The Case of the 1991 Presidential Election*

The term of the President is two years. Reelection is possible only once in principle. One, but fundamental, reason for this is that the Presidential or Prime Ministerial post must be rotated among the factions. The political situation is thus inclined to be unstable.

The incumbent President or Prime Minister, Kaifu could not stand in the fall of 1991 as he had lost the support of the Takeshita faction. Voting by the Diet members and ordinary party members was carried out. Thanks to the support of the Takeshita faction Miyazawa was elected. The Takeshita faction is the largest and the most powerful faction. This faction has exercised decisive influence in Presidential elections for the last twenty years.

4 *The Social Democratic Party of Japan*

(1) *History*

*Foundation in 1945*

Before the War there were minor socialist parties and powerless trade unions. During the War, they were dissolved and absorbed into the total war system. It should be kept in mind that the socialist groups managed to coexist with the conservatives.

In December of 1945, the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) was founded. Recently, it has changed its English name to the Social Democratic Party of Japan. But its Japanese name "Nihon-Shakai-Tō" remains the same. Its direct translation is "The Japan Socialist Party." It seems to have changed its English name so that in international circles it might appear to be less socialistic or Marxist, and to be rather moderate. In other words, it was originally more socialist. In Japanese politics, the word "socialism" does not convey content associated with Fabianism in Britain, but rather Marxist-Leninism.

From the start, the ideological spectrum within the JSP has ranged widely from near conservative to extreme Marxist-Leninist. It has always been a fundamental characteristic of the SDPJ that many separate groups survive together within the party.

*The Split in 1951*

The JSP split into two parties over the question of the Peace Treaty in 1951: the Right Wing Socialist Party and the Left Wing Socialist Party. Leaders who wanted a treaty with the West only created the former, while those who sought a more comprehensive treaty, which included the East, created the latter party. A natural outcome of this split was that both parties fought and damaged each other. They both suffered.

*Reunification in 1955*

The two parties were reunited into the JSP in the fall of 1955. Strictly speaking, it was not a reunification but rather a situation of cohabitation. The theoretical and personal discord between the two wings has never dissipated.

1955 saw both a reunited JSP and the LDP merger. Japan appeared to have a two-party system. Or at least the Japanese party system seemed to be moving towards one.

#### *The Secession of 1960 and Afterwards*

The JSP broke up over the U. S.-Japan Security Treaty in 1960. One faction within the right wing of the Party left to form itself into the Democratic Socialist Party. This faction supported the Treaty, while the left wing and finally the JSP as a whole, opposed it.

In the 1969 General Election, the JSP met with severe defeat, and has declined gradually ever since. After the historical loss in the 1986 so-called "double" election, Takako Doi became the first chairwoman. With the help of her high popularity and the LDP's consecutive errors (the Recruit bribery scandal and the high-handed introduction of the consumption tax, for example), the JSP won a landslide victory in the 1989 General Election for the House of Councillors. It also achieved a happy result in the 1990 Lower House General Election.

But the SDPJ (as mentioned earlier the English name has been changed) suffered disastrous defeat in the 1991 unified local election. Doi was forced to resign as chairperson.

#### (2) *Structure*

##### *Chairperson*

In principle the highest institutional organ of the SDPJ is the Party Convention. But it usually meets only once a year. The

central executive committee prepares the agenda for the convention and manages all party affairs in substance. The chief of this committee is called the Chairperson. He or she is the top leader of the party.

#### *Secretary General*

The second most powerful post is that of Secretary General, the chief of the secretariat and a member of the central executive committee. This position is at the core of the party organization. The vice chairperson is the third ranking party officer. Members of the central executive committee follow these three leaders.

#### *Shadow Cabinet*

The SDPJ established its first shadow cabinet several years ago. This was an epoch making event for this party of eternal opposition. But it lacks experience and capability. It possesses neither sufficient resources nor funds. It appears to be an unrealistic initiative unless the preconditions for the establishment of a coalition government can be agreed upon by the opposition parties.

#### *Local Organizations*

The SDPJ maintains prefectural chapters. Under them are the regional branches and then the work place branches or residential branches. Actually, however, the organizations which are active in the work places are the trade unions. Many trade union officers are members of the SDPJ. The residential branches often exist only nominally.

#### *Party Members*

Allegedly, party membership stands at about 80,000 as of 1992. Many members are the officers of trade unions. Many of these

are civil servants who belonged to the former General Council of Trade Unions.

(3) *Supporters*

*the General Council of Trade Unions*

The SDPJ receives over 10 million votes in every General Election, despite a maximum membership of only about 80,000. The General Council of Trade Unions has supported the SDPJ for many years. It has provided the SDPJ with political funds, candidates, campaigners and other necessities. It has been said that the SDPJ is the political department of the Council.

*Citizens' Movement*

In recent years the power of the trade unions has declined. It is now difficult to win with the help of only the trade unions. But the SDPJ seems to be able to run before the wind when it gains the support of various citizens' groups or movements. The participation of many women inspired by Doi's leadership seemed to make possible the SDPJ victory in the 1989 Upper House General Election.

*Negative Support*

Many votes for the SDPJ can be said to be protest votes. Many of its ten million votes are cast negatively in order to express dissatisfaction with the LDP. The SDPJ is smaller than Kōmeitō or the JCP in terms of party membership and enthusiastic supporters.

However it also appears that many LDP votes are cast negatively, due to a lack of trust in the opposition parties. To put it more generally, Japanese electors seem to have little confidence in either the parties or the politicians available to them.

(4) *Factions*

*The Five Main Factions*

The factions of the SDPJ can be classified broadly into right wing and left wing factions. The right wingers are democratic socialists or reformists. The right wing can further be divided into two groups. One is the so-called "Suiyōkai" faction, which is now headed by Makoto Tanabe. The name means "meeting on Wednesday." The other is called "Seikōken". The left wing can also be divided into three groups: the "Tsukurukai", Social Democratic Forum, and the "Shakaishugi-Kyōkai". This last group is usually referred to in English "as the Socialist Association".

The Socialist Association provides the 'socialistic' or Marxist-Leninist features of the SDPJ. The SDPJ could not be described as a 'socialist' party without this organization. While containing only a few Diet members, it has many activists in trade unions and local branches. It organizes many ordinary party members and is constantly active. The leaders are orthodox Marxist-Leninists. The other four factions are groups which consist mainly of Diet members.

*Policy Factions or Ideological Factions*

The SDPJ factions are similar to LDP factions, nevertheless there are some differences between them. The SDPJ factions are not human relationship factions but policy or more precisely ideological factions. The SDPJ has been in opposition for so long that its factions have been organized not over conflicts regarding pragmatic policies, but rather around ideological controversies. The SDPJ factions are not as systematically organized or as active as the LDP factions. Moreover quite a few Diet members do not belong to any faction. The LDP is not like this, almost

all LDP Diet members belong to a faction.

(5) *Ideology*

*Marxist-Leninism*

The SDPJ was a 'socialist' or Marxist-Leninist party in principle up until the mid-1980s. It was a party which aimed at a socialist revolution at least judging from its former party program. The Socialist Association was thoroughly Marxist-Leninist, and is so even now. The left wing as a whole was pro-Chinese or pro-Soviet. But the New Declaration promulgated in 1986 diluted the socialism of the party.

*Democratic Socialism*

The ideology of the right wing is democratic socialism. The right wingers are anti-communist and pro-Western. In recent years the influence of democratic socialists within the party has been increasing. The change of the party's English name, from the Japan Socialist Party to the Democratic Socialist Party of Japan, is indicative of this. The current SDPJ is becoming a so called national party rather than a class-based party.

*Pacifism and Unarmed Neutrality*

The SDPJ has sought to protect the Constitution, above all Article 9 which renounces war. At least this has been the belief of the many voters who have cast their ballots for the SDPJ. After the disastrous end of the war, these voters have supported the party because of their wish for peace. The SDPJ has insisted on unarmed neutrality and has opposed the Self-Defence Forces and the Japan-US Security Treaty consistently, at least officially. Neutrality has meant a policy which has made friendship possible not only with the Western camp but also with the Eastern camp. In practice, the inconsistency between the left wing's pro-com-



munist stance and the right wing's orientation towards the West has forced the SDPJ into a policy of neutrality.

However, given the new international situation created by the conclusion of the cold war, the SDPJ has been compelled to review its stand. A pivotal factor in possible future party realignments seems to be the way in which the SDPJ adapts itself to new circumstances. Because of changes in the global environment Japanese politics finds itself in a fluid situation.

## 5 *Kōmeitō, the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) and the Japan Communist Party (JCP)*

### (1) *Kōmeitō*

#### *Origins, "Sōka-Gakkai"*

In 1964 "Sōka-Gakkai" formed a formal party named Kōmeitō. From the beginning Kōmeitō was the political wing of "Sōka-Gakkai". This is still the case today.

"Sōka-Gakkai" is the largest of the recent "new religions" in Japan. It is an organization of lay persons who claim to believe in "Nichiren-Shōshū", a form of Buddhism.

The religion grew rapidly during the period when urbanization and high economic growth was experienced mainly in large cities. It attracted newcomers from rural areas.

#### *History*

"Sōka-Gakkai" launched itself into politics under the leadership of its third President, "Daisaku Ikeda". It fielded many candidates in the elections. In 1964 Sōka-Gakkai launched Kōmeitō as its independent political section.

In 1970, Kōmeitō proclaimed a "declaration of the separation of politics and religion", after being criticized for anti-democratic

activities and gaining a negative image in the opinion of the general public. From that time onwards, Kōmeitō has been acting as an entity superficially different from “Sōka-Gakkai”. The party has become rather stagnant.

### *Structure*

Formally the party conference is the highest organ of the party. But the Central Executive Committee manages ordinary party affairs. The most powerful member is the Chairperson of the committee. The second highest position is that of the Secretary General. There are neither factions nor internal struggles within the party. Kōmeitō is proud of its strong unity.

At the local level, Kōmeitō has prefectural chapters, and under them, sub-branches. It reportedly has about 200,000 members. The important index, however, is not the party membership but the membership of “Sōka-Gakkai”. This organization is believed to have peaked and its membership to have levelled off in recent years. Consequently, Kōmeitō’s membership has also levelled off.

### *Supporters*

It goes without saying that the most important support base of Kōmeitō is “Sōka-Gakkai”. Almost all members are said to belong to this religious group. At the grass roots level, electioneering is carried out mainly or wholly by the branches of the faith. Many of its supporters, namely members of the faith, are found among managers and workers of small to medium sized companies in large cities. Kōmeitō is a typical urban based party. Recently “Sōka-Gakkai” has been criticised by the highest ranking temple of “Nichiren-Shōshū”, “Taiseki-ji”. This has created problems for Kōmeitō.

### *Ideology*

The political line between conservatism and progressivism is called "middle of the road" or "centrist". Kōmeitō is a party of the center. Kōmeitō considers welfare to be important. Many of its supporters have low incomes. It is dovish and supports the present peace constitution.

### (2) *The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP)*

#### *Origin and History*

In 1960, a left wing leader of the JSP, Suehiro Nishio, and his followers left the JSP and formed themselves into a new party, the DSP. This party has experienced continual problems since then. It has been particularly difficult to establish an identity separate from the JSP.

From the outset, the DSP was unable to maintain cordial relations with the left wing of the JSP (SDPJ). However it has been on comparatively good terms with the right. There is a possibility that the SDPJ and the DSP will merge under the hegemony of the right wing of the SDPJ. Of course this depends on a number of factors.

#### *Structure*

The chairmanship of the Central Executive Committee is the highest position in the Party. The second highest is that of Secretary General. However, formally, the party conference is the highest decision making body. It is said that something like factions exist in the party. Sometimes power struggles which take place behind closed doors are visible to the outside world.

At the level of local organization, the DSP has prefectural chapters, and then regional branches and sub-branches. But in

actual fact these bodies are dormant. Membership is estimated to be about 70,000. Most members are officers of trade unions affiliated with “the Confederation of Labour”.

#### *Supporters*

The most powerful organizations that support the DSP are trade unions under the control of the “the Confederation of Labour”. The Confederation was organized in 1964 mainly by unions seceding from “the General Council of Trade Unions”. The former organization is more moderate than the latter. It pursues a policy of cooperation between capital and labour. On the other hand, the General Council of Trade Unions is in principle an organization orientated towards class struggle.

Some companies give political donations to the DSP. Some companies also canvass alongside trade unions for candidates authorized by the party.

#### *Ideology*

The DSP is a center middle party. It was at the outset, a moderate democratic socialist party similar to the JSP. However it has been moving steadily toward conservatism and anti-communism. It is now rather close to the LDP. It is more hawkish on defence policy than the LDP. The current DSP is not ,socialistic, even if we use this term in the British socialist sense.

#### *(3) The Japan Communist Party*

##### *History*

The JCP was founded in 1922. The founders appear to have been influenced by the Russian Revolution. During the war the JCP was violently suppressed due to its opposition to the “Tennō (Emperor) System” and the imperialistic war. Directly after the war, the US occupation forces released all political prisoners.

The JCP was rebuilt and grew rapidly. But US policy changed with the cold war. With the outbreak of the Korean War, the US purged many members of the JCP from their workplaces. The JCP was severely damaged. "Kenji Miyamoto" rebuilt the party in 1955. It made good progress practising a kind of quasi-parliamentarism under his leadership. In the 1980s, however, it stagnated. In recent years, with the drastic changes taking place in world, it has been in decline.

### *Structure*

The JCP is a typical organized party. Following party decisions all members act in a systematic manner. The highest ranking member is the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee. The second most senior position is that of Chief of the Secretariat. The party conference is the most powerful body.

In terms of local organization, the JCP has prefectural committees and under them regional committees. The lowest branches are workshop or residential committees, which were called cells in the past. Membership is estimated to total about 400,000. It is the sole mass membership party in Japan.

### *Supporters*

The JCP has no powerful support organization such as: the "Federation of Economic Organizations" in the case of the LDP, the "General Council of Trade Unions" in the case of the SDPJ, "Sōka-Gakkai" for Kōmeitō or the "Confederation of Labour" for the DSP. Although the JCP has several support organizations, these are substantially organized by the party: for instance, workers' organizations, youth organizations, women's organizations and so on. The JCP has many supporters in large cities. It is an urban based party.

*Ideology*

Needless to say, the JCP was originally a Marxist-Leninist party. However it has abandoned its original orientation and has moved toward so-called Euro-Communism. It is unclear where this party will go now that East European and Soviet communism has collapsed.

(4) *Other Parties*

*The United Social Democratic Party*

This party is a small party formed in 1978 by a few Diet members who left the SDPJ. They had been members of the SDPJ right wing. The political orientation of this party is about the same as that of the right wing of the SDPJ. The senior leader is "Satsuki Eda". He is the son of the famous late right wing leader of the SDPJ.

*The Progressive Party*

This party was formed in 1986 by one Diet member and his followers, who did not return to the LDP when the "New Liberal Club" dissolved. It is a small conservative party.

*"Rengō Diet Society"*

The confederation of trade unions, the original Japanese name of which is "Rengō", is of course not a party but a national organization of trade unions. The Confederation of Labour and the General Council of Trade Unions merged and formed themselves into this new labour organization.

It ran its own candidates and won some seats in the recent Upper House elections. The Diet members elected on this ticket have formed a group named the "Rengō Diet Society". But both

the political stand and the future of this society is unclear. Its future is partially dependent on future party realignments.

### *The Others*

There are several mini parties with one or two seats in the House of Councillors. Almost all Diet members of these parties are elected through the system of proportional representation.

## *6 The Party System*

### *(1) Is Japan a Multi-Party System?*

#### *What is a Multi-Party System?*

It is well known that the famous French political scientist Moris Duverger (1917- ) produced a three-tier classification of party systems: one-party systems, two-party systems and multi-party systems.

This classification system is used universally. But it is not necessarily clear what a “multi-party system” actually refers to in practice. Although it is obvious that the number of parties within the political system is the pivotal factor, it is open to question whether all systems consisting of three or more parties should be classified as multi-party systems. It is unquestioned that a system composed of three or more parties in government, either at the same time or consecutively, is a multi-party system. But it is not so clear whether a multi-party system can also refer to a case where one party is always in government.

#### *Does Japan have a Multi-Party System?*

The number of parties in Japan is five or more. But government has long been the domain of only one. Surely it is questionable whether the Japanese party system is a multi-party system. In

general, multi-party systems or two-party systems are preconditions for democracy. It could be claimed that the absence in practice, of one of these systems in Japan negates the possibility of a democratic system. Regular changes in the corridors of power is a precondition for a true two-party system.

(2) *Does Japan Have a One-Party System?*

*What is a One-Party System?*

The phrase 'one-party system' reminds us of the now defunct Soviet model or the still functioning Chinese model. The Soviet model was known as an institutional one-party system. The Constitution prohibited any party other than the Communist Party. There could be no other party in the system. It was criticized as totalitarian.

*Does Japan Have a One-Party System?*

The Japanese party system is, needless to say, not an institutional one-party system. Many opposition parties are active without any constitutional restraints.

Strictly speaking, China has several 'non-government parties'. However they are allowed by the Constitution only on the condition that they neither oppose the government nor strive for political power. Although there is some similarity between the Chinese party system and the Japanese system, the Japanese Constitution does not enforce such a situation. It can be said that the Chinese party system is a kind of one-party system in substance. However, the Japanese system differs in some fundamental respects from the Chinese model.



(3) *Does Japan Have a Predominant Party System?*

*What is a Predominant Party System?*

What should we call a system consisting of one perpetual ruling party and one or more perpetual opposition parties that nevertheless have the constitutional right to assume political power? Such a case is usually referred to as a predominant party system. This term was used first by the famous political researcher Giovanni Sartori. Gradually it has found popular currency. This is a system in which one party has monopolized power for many years while another party or other parties have legally competed with it.

*Does Japan Have a Predominant Party System?*

At one time some commentators said that Japan had or would soon have a two-party system. Such remarks were often heard in the days of the emergence of the so-called "55 regime". But this quasi two-party system never developed into a true two-party system. It was, at best, a one and one half party system. It can safely be said that the post-war Japanese system has been a predominant party system, at least so far.

The unstable situation at the beginning of the 1990s, however, indicates various possibilities for future party realignments. Changes in the electoral system will also have a powerful effect on the party system providing such changes really take place. It is the opinion of the author that the Japanese party system will change sooner or later, in part, due to radical changes outside of Japan, following the collapse of world communism.

*7 Comparative Analysis with Britain and the US*

(1) *Comparison with British Parties*

*Differences and Similarities Between the LDP and the British Conservative Party*

The Conservative Party was established in the middle of the 19th century, however it also has a long history as the Tory Party. In this text we will use the term 'the BCP' as a convenient abbreviation for the British Conservative Party.

It goes without saying that the BCP is a conservative party. Although in pre-Thatcher days it accepted the Welfare state, it has always supported a free market economy in principle and has opposed communism determinedly. The BCP has been supported by the managers of enterprises, landowners and the upper-and-middle classes. It has been dependent financially on large enterprises, although the party membership fee has also contributed to party finances to some extent. The BCP and the LDP essentially share the same character.

Nevertheless there are some differences between these two parties. The BCP has been an organized party for a century or more. It is representative of organized parties in the present world. On the other hand the LDP has not yet become an organized party. The top leader of the BCP has more power and authority than his or her counterpart in the LDP. The former is, so to speak, a supreme commander not only in name but in reality. Under his or her leadership the whole membership acts in a systematic manner. But the President of the LDP is not necessarily the most powerful leader of the party, and is rather hindered by factions other than his own. The BCP has no factions similar to those of the LDP, however there are loose groups based on policy differences.

Concerning the social background of the members of Parliament, the BCP is fundamentally a party of the social elite. On the other hand, the LDP contains a lot of self-made men. Nevertheless Thatcher was not really a member of the social elite from birth and Major is a typical self-made man. And so called hereditary politicians have been on the rise in recent years among Liberal Democrats.

*Differences and Similarities Between the SDPJ and the British Labour Party*

The British National Center of Trade Unions founded the Labour Party at the beginning of the twentieth century. From the outset, it was a party for organized labour. In this text we shall use the term 'the BLP' as a convenient abbreviation for the British Labour Party.

There are fundamental similarities between the SDPJ and the BLP. Both parties are based on trade unions. They are both socialist or democratic socialist parties. Both have factions caused by ideological conflict, ranging from the moderate right to the radical left.

But there are also some differences between them. Although the BLP possesses sufficient experience and skill as a government party, the SDPJ has been in permanent opposition up to the present. The shadow cabinet of the former is realistic, while the latter's is unrealistic or ornamental. The BLP transformed itself from a class party to a national party half a century or more ago. On the other hand, the SDPJ started to follow the same course only in recent years.

In Britain individual trade unions affiliate with the BLP as a

group. But the SDPJ has no such group membership in principle. Party membership is composed of individual members. Parliamentarians in the BLP include only a few ex-trade union officers. On the contrary, many SDPJ Diet members are in this category. In Japan the trade unions seem to canvass not for the party but for their own leaders.

## *(2) Comparisons with the British Party System*

### *The British Party System*

The British party system is a representative two-party system. It has a long history. It was first organized around the Tories and the Whigs, then around the Conservatives and the Liberals and now around the Conservatives and Labour. In Japan, the British two-party system has been admired as the pinnacle of constitutional politics for many decades. For the Japanese, it conjures up images of regular power transfers and clean politics. Both of these are lacking in Japan.

However, the British party system is not as a matter of fact a perfect two-party system. It has always included a third but comparatively large party as well as other local parties. At present, the third party is the Social Liberal Democratic Party. The British party system has supported regular power transfers but it is open to question as to whether it has also supported stability. Take the case of hung parliaments, for example.

### *Differences Between the Japanese System and the British System*

The Japanese predominant party system may have produced political stability and economic prosperity. On the other hand, the British two-party system also produced stability under the

socalled consensus politics which operated before Margaret Thatcher's term. But it did not seem to promote prosperity. However it is difficult to pinpoint the causes of British economic stagnation. Meanwhile it is also questionable as to whether it was the predominant system which brought prosperity to Japan. It may be the case that the Japanese economy has prospered in spite of structural corruption and a single party's long period of dominance.

During the Thatcher decade, the two-party system produced not consensus politics but rather an adversary form of politics which split Britain into two nations. A two-party system composed of two parties standing against each other is unlikely to promote political stability. But if a two-party system organized around rotten Conservatives and sympathetic Social Democrats emerges, politics in Japan may fall into a bottomless pit of corruption.

### *(3) Comparison with Parties in the United States*

#### *Characteristics of the Parties in the US*

The US has two major parties. They are, it need hardly be said, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. In this text, the RP and the DP will be used as their respective abbreviations. Both parties are conservative in their fundamental beliefs, or at least not socialistic. The former is more conservative and right wing, however, while the latter is more moderate and stands nearer the center.

Neither are organized parties. On this point they are essentially different from British parties. The American parties are far looser even when compared with Japanese parties. Some political analysts say that the US has one hundred parties because each of the

fifty states has two parties. The individual branches in each state are independent just like separate parties. Both parties lack the kind of nationwide organization that could provide for systematic activity. The sole exception to this is the campaign process for the Presidential election which is held every four years.

*Differences and Similarities Between the LDP and the RP and the DP in the US*

It is difficult to decide which Party is more similar to the LDP, the RP or the DP. The RP is supported mainly by upper-middle class voters and whites. On the other hand, many lower class and coloured voters support the DP. But the LDP is a typical catch-all party. The LDP is supported by the upper and middle classes, but also acquires many votes from the lower classes. To put it simply, the RP is a party for tax cuts while the DP is a party for welfare. But the LDP may be called a party for tax cuts and welfare.

As explained earlier, the LDP is a kind of factional coalition. But it maintains strict discipline inside the Diet. All Liberal Democrats speak and vote in unanimity under orders from the headquarters. In this regard, the LDP is a more disciplined party than the British parties. The other parties in Japan also maintain strict discipline inside the Diet.

But in the US, so called cross-voting is common. The American parties exhibit weak discipline in Congress. They lack either the concept of party membership or party discipline.

*(4) Comparison with the Party System in the US*

*The Party System in the US*

In a sense the US has a more typical two-party system than Britain. The RP and the DP have monopolised all the seats for many years. But neither is a systematic entity with a unified organization. In a sense the US has an atomized multi-party system.

In the Congress of the US, cross-voting is a common practice. Bills are often proposed by individual Congress members. Meanwhile in the British Parliament, bills are proposed by the government or the opposition party, and cross-voting is not necessarily rare.

But in Japan we never see cross-voting in the Diet. As far as voting in the Diet is concerned, the Japanese seem to be perfect groupists. They obey absolutely the decisions of their group.

*Differences between the Japanese System and the American System*

The LDP has monopolised political power for many years. No matter what we call the Japanese party system, this is its most important and distinctive feature. The US has no such concentration of power, thanks to its party system and to regular changes of power. The equilibrium or balance of power in the US was also realized in another political dimension: the RP President and the DP dominated Congress.

In recent years, however, a kind of equilibrium can be seen in Japanese politics. It is a balance between the LDP's majority in the Lower House and the oppositions' majority in the Upper House.

As a description for a textbook, it is certainly true that Japan has a predominant party system while the US has a two-party

system. However the actual facts of party politics must be analysed so as to take into account more complicated factors.

### *8 Theoretical Analysis*

#### *Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy*

Robert Michels (1876-1936) was educated in Germany, France and Italy. In his student days he was a member of the SPD (Sozial Demokratische Partei Deutschland). He was a social democrat with an anarchist tint. But he was too pessimistic to believe in the future of democracy or socialism. After he had studied several social democratic parties and trade unions, he insisted on the following: even democratic parties pursuing socialism will deteriorate inevitably into oligarchy. Michels names this inevitable tendency the 'iron law of oligarchy'. He provided the following reasons for this law. A party is a militant organization constantly in the battle field. Such an organization cannot help establishing a strong leadership. Such leadership turns into an oligarchy inevitably because of the passiveness of the ordinary party members and their worship of their leaders. Michels' representative work is "Zur Soziologie des Parteiwesens in der modernen Demokratie." It is a classic that all students of politics should read.

#### *Duverger and MacKenzie*

The relationship between democracy and oligarchy within a party is a fundamental theme in the sociology of parties. Maurice Duverger studied European parties, especially socialist and communist parties after the Second World War. He affirmed the tendency toward oligarchy. Unlike Michels, however, he did not



believe that it was inevitable. He was not so pessimistic. “Les partis politique” is his best-known work.

Robert MacKenzie (1917–1981) studied British parties. He reached almost the same conclusion as Michels. His “British Political Parties” is a very famous work.

*Democracy Inside Japanese Parties*

LDP government extending over several decades has often been criticised for its undemocratic rule. Some critics use the phrase “dictatorship of the LDP”. This ‘dictatorial’ tendency has two aspects. One is the long term dominance of one party. The other is the undemocratic make-up of the LDP.

As a formal institution, the LDP is a democratic party. The Party Conference is the highest body and the President is chosen through an election in which the whole membership has the chance to participate.

However, it is well known that the voice of the millions of ordinary members exists only nominally. In substance, the LDP is managed exclusively by the LDP Diet members. Above all by the top leaders. We easily find Michels’ tendency towards oligarchy.

But the minority rule of the LDP indicates more undemocratic features. The bosses of the factions behind the scene often exert more decisive power than the party’s formal senior officers.

On the other hand the tendency towards oligarchy can also be seen in the opposition parties. The JCP appears to be representative of the tendency. Kōmeitō also appears to be thoroughly controlled by its top leaders. The SDPJ and the DSP are under the control of the bosses of the factional groups or the big trade unions.

(2) *Liberty and Party Politics*

*The Party Analysis of Ostrogorski*

Ostrogorski (1854–1919) was a Russian. He studied the political parties of Britain and other countries. His work “Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties” is a classic that should be read by all political researchers.

He observed the relationship between liberty and the development of party organizations. In his age, the Tories and the Whigs had evolved into organized mass parties, namely the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party.

As a liberal, he concluded that a large party organization led to the curtailment of liberty. Stated simply, his argument was that while power and authority were concentrated in the hands of a few top leaders in a large party membership, the liberty of other party members was gradually reduced. The parliamentary members lose their independence and turn into a voting machine controlled by the top leaders. Generally speaking, it does appear that parliamentary sovereignty is an unrealistic principle without the complete independence or liberty of members from outside organizations.

*The Reality of Party Politics in Japan*

Inside the Diet, at least, no Diet members belonging to any of the major parties possess the freedom to vote or even to give a speech. In this context, the five major parties are all perfectly organized. If some members were to vote or speak against the direction of their party, in other words, resist the will of the bosses, they would be expelled from the party. Debate in the Houses is essentially ceremonial. The scenario is usually

set up in advance outside the Houses through negotiation among the parties.

At the electoral level, however, there are some differences. In the case of the JCP or Kōmeitō, which are typical strictly organized parties, politicians belonging to these parties could never stand against their headquarters without a formal ticket and win an election. But in the case of the LDP, there are about ten or more such politicians in every General Election for the Lower House. It is not rare for Liberal Democrats to stand themselves or to support candidates not authorised by their party. In some elections for the heads of local government, they even support the candidates endorsed by the opposition parties, ignoring their own party decision. The LDP may be a party of 'liberty' on this point. The winners are given honours and suitable posts in the LDP directly after the election. A blind eye is turned to their disobedience or resistance.

In contrast, the JCP and Kōmeitō exclude the discontented. Any disobedience is followed by expulsion. There appears to be no freedom for individual party members, at least looking in from the outside. The SDPJ and the DSP lie somewhere between these two extremes.

### (3) *The Typology of Parties*

#### *From Honorable Party to Mass Party*

Max Weber (1868-1920) provided a typology for the development of modern parties from 'party of notables' to 'mass membership party'. The former is organized by honorable persons. The honorable persons are respected people who have assets and culture. The latter form of party possesses a large membership

composed of many more common people.

The Tories and the Whigs were representative honorable parties. Their core memberships were aristocrats, landowners and so-called gentlemen. However, they developed into mass parties.

In pre-war days, the conservative parties in Japan were on the whole parties of notables. In the post-war era, the LDP can not be said to be so. The conservative political world includes many self-made men. However, the LDP has not yet transformed itself into a mass party.

### *From Class Party to National Party*

The transformation from party of notable to mass membership party is relevant in the case of conservative parties. On the other hand, the transformation from class party to national party is relevant in the case of workers' parties.

A class party is one that acts in the interests of particular classes, in particular those of working classes. A national party is one that attempts to act in the interests of the whole nation. Both the British Labour Party and the Social Democratic Party of Germany followed this course when they came to power.

Now the SDPJ appears to be changing from a class party into a national party. It appears to be getting nearer to ministerial offices. Although its former policy document "the Road to Socialism" symbolised the class struggle strategy for many years, "the New Declaration" of 1986 is a symbol of the new orientation toward national party status.

Though the SDPJ may have abandoned its previous commitment to act in the narrow interests of the trade unions, it is uncertain whether it will become a party for the whole nation or one that

will receive donations from companies and be intimate with LDP politicians behind the scenes.

### *Urban Based Party and Rural Based Party*

The LDP is basically an rural based party. It maintains considerable support in the large cities. It is the sole catch-all party in Japan. The SDPJ is a rather rural based party in spite of its working class origin. Very few youth, so called white collar workers, unorganized workers and their wives, especially in large cities, support the SDPJ, at least positively. However, the SDPJ attracts many protest votes from voters who do not want to vote for the LDP.

Kōmeitō and the JCP are urban based parties. Neither Sōka-Gakkai nor the Communists are powerful in the rural areas. This is the reason why the SDPJ easily attracts the protest vote. The DSP is not very influential either in urban or rural regions.

### *(4) The Typology of Party Systems*

Giovanni Sartori (1924- ) is a representative political researcher who studied modern parties and party systems. His work "Parties and Party Systems" is very famous. Sartori classified the one-party system into several sub-categories: the institutional, the hegemonic and the predominant. According to his classification, the LDP falls under the category of a predominant party system.

### *Two-Party System*

Duverger classified the two-party system into two categories, namely, the principled and the tactical. If we call the "55 regime" a two-party system, then it was a principled two-party system. The LDP and the SDPJ opposed each other on the basis of

principled or ideological conflicts. But those days are long gone. It will become a tactical system, characterized by no substantial confrontation, if indeed a two-party system does emerge from the darkness of the political community in the near future.

### Further Readings

I will refer only to books in English, most of which have been published recently. Many journal articles are also available. However, there is not sufficient space to list them here. No Japanese works are recorded. I am afraid that it may be quite difficult for non-Japanese students to read Japanese language works. As I mentioned earlier this book is not written for specialized researchers of Japanese politics.

(1) *Fundamental Literature on Japanese Political Parties and Party Politics in General*

Stockwin, J.A.A., Japan: Divided Politics in a Growth Economy (Weidenfeld, (2ed.) 1982)

This book overviews the whole landscape of Japanese politics clearly and skillfully. The contents of this book are as follows.

- 1 Introduction 2 Historical Background 3 Social Background
- 4 The American Occupation 5 Political Chronicle 1945-81
- 6 The National Diet and Parliamentary Election 7 The Liberal Democratic Party 8 The Structure and Process of Central Government 9 The Politics of Opposition 10 Some Problems of the Constitution 11 Domestic Political Issues 12 Issues of Foreign Policy and Defence 13 Conclusion and Dilemmas

This is the best book on Japanese politics.

Scalapino, Robert A. and Masumi, Junnosuke, Parties and Politics

in Contemporary Japan (University of California Press,  
Cambridge University Press, 1964).

This book is the first full scale work in English on post-war Japanese party politics. It is a classic study of Japanese politics. It describes post-war politics led mainly by the LDP (and its antecedent), and the SDPJ until 1960.

As general works dealing with post-war Japanese politics in English prior to this book, the following should be consulted: *Quingley, Harold and Tuner, John*, The New Japan: Government and Politics (University of Minnesota Press, 1956).

*Yanaga, Chitoshi*, Japanese People and Politics (New York, 1956).  
*Ike, Nobutaka*, Japanese Politics: An Introductory Survey (Bradford & Dickens, 1957).

*Ike, Nobutaka*, Japanese Politics: Patron-Client Democracy (Alfred A. Knopf, 1972).

*Ike, Nobutaka*, A Theory of Japanese Democracy (Westview Press, 1978).

These books analyse the conservative dominance in Japanese politics. The author's analysis of LDP dominance in rural areas using demographic indexes and a patron-client model is especially interesting. In rural regions where the LDP maintains many safe seats, conservative leaders are considered to be patrons while their supporters are considered to be their clients. The relationship is not feudal but is also not equal. However, in recent years this patron-client relationship has tended to weaken even in rural areas. This kind of analysis is a useful strategy for observing politics in many parts of Asia, Central and South America and the southern parts of Italy.

*Baerwald, Hans H.* Party Politics in Japan (Allen and Unwin,

1986).

This book offers an overview of dynamic party politics in the Diet and elections in current Japan. His analysis of compromises and conflicts among parties in the Diet is especially interesting.

The contents are as follows: Chap.1 The Political Party System, 1955-1985. Chap.2 The Electoral Systems of the Diet. Chap.3 The Diet: Internal Governance, External Control. Chap.4 Accommodation, Confrontation and the Diet. Chap.5 Japanese Politics and the Diet. Chap.6 Epilogue — August 1986.

This book argues that the fragmentation of opponents has benefited the LDP and that LDP factionalism has proved on the one hand to be beneficial to the party's capacity to survive while on the other to bring it perilously close to splits and "near parity" with its opponents. The book's analysis is focused on party politics in the Diet under this near parity between the ruling LDP and the opposition parties. A quotation from a senior cabinet minister, "No other institution is as inefficient as the Diet. The Opposition knows that we (LDP) will not use *Kyōkō Saiketsu*, and that everything will be handled by means of mutual consultations", located at the end of chap.4, may reflect his assessment of Japanese party politics.

His other works on Japanese politics include "Japan's Parliament, An Introduction" (Cambridge University Press, 1974).

*Hrebenar, Ronald J., and et al*, The Japanese Party System (Frederick A. Preaeger, 1986).

This book offers fundamental information on Japanese political parties to the first half of the 1980s. There is also a brief report of the 1986 'double' general elections. Chap.9, The Liberal Democratic Party: The Ruling Party of Japan. is written by Hrebenar



and two Japanese researchers, Tomita, Nobuo and Nakamura, Akira. Chap.4 The Japan Socialist Party: A Politics of Permanent Opposition. is written by Stockwin, J.A.A. Both Chap.6 The Kōmeitō: Party of 'Buddhist Democracy', and Chap.7 The Democratic Socialist Party: Enigma of the Center, are written by Hrebenar. Chap.5 The Japan Communist Party: The 'Lovable' Party. is the work of Berton, Peter.

Hrebenar argues that the Japanese party system is changing from the LDP's one-party rule toward an era of coalition government under the dominance of the LDP. He remarks that coalition governments, even if they become the norm of the late 1980s and 1990s, may not mark the beginning of a new period of instability. This is particularly interesting given the political situation after the 1989 House of Councillors general election which deprived the LDP of its majority in the upper house.

The second edition of this book was published in 1992 and includes a new chapter by Hrebenar: 'The Changing Japanese Party System in the 1990s'. The author makes the following observation: "More likely, a series of coalition governments between the LDP and various centrist parties is possible in the 1990s. If formal coalitions do not occur, then one would expect the existing pattern of issuespecific informal agreements to continue (pp.292-3)."

*Ishida, Takeshi and Krauss, Ellis. S* (ed), *Democracy in Japan* (University of Pittsburg Press, 1989)

Chap.5 of this book 'Political Parties and Political Opposition' (Stockwin, J.A.A) analyses Japanese party politics from a broad comparative perspective. Why has the Japanese system evolved its "predominant party character"? Stockwin answers this question

by comparison with other nations. He remarks that the JSP rather than following the “aggregative” path of the SPD (Germany) or the Labour Party (Britain), turned inward on itself and sought to appeal to the ideologically committed and to what the party itself defined, unrealistically, as the working class of Japan.

This book is composed of fourteen chapters and analyses the characteristic features of Japanese democracy, including not only political democracy but also social and economic democracy. *Pempel, T.J.* (ed.), *Uncommon Democracies: The One-Party Dominant Regimes* (Cornell University Press, 1990).

This book offers a comparative analysis of one-party dominant regimes. Based on the assumption that the multi-party system with its changes of political power is indispensable for democracy, one-party dominant democracies are classified as uncommon democracies.

The book provides studies of party politics in Japan, Sweden, Israel, Italy and other countries. The following chapters are especially noteworthy. Chap.4 Defence Controversies and One-Party Dominance: The opposition in Japan and West Germany (Ōtake, Hideo). Chap.6 The Political Economy of Conservative Resurgence under Recession: Public Policies and Political Support in Japan, 1977-1983 (Inoguchi, Takashi). Chap.7 The Decline of Dominant Parties: Parliamentary Politics in Sweden and Japan in the 1970s (Ellis S. Kraus and John Pierre). Chap.9 The Dominant Party and Social Coalitions in Japan (Muramatsu, Michio and Krauss, Ellis S).

*Kataoka, Tetsuya* (ed.) *Creating Single-Party Democracy: Japan's Postwar Political System* (Hoover Institution Press, 1992).

This book is composed of eight articles. These articles show

the origins of the postwar Japanese regime. The author reflects on the origin under the current situation as the cold war comes to a close. Chap.8 The 1955 System: The Origin of Japan's Postwar Politics is written by the editor. In this article, he remarks as follows: The primary reason for this seemingly stateless condition, enigmatically characterised by Karel Van Wolferen, is the constitution brought and maintained by the cold war. Following the end of the cold war a movement looking toward constitutional revision and political realignment may soon be on the way.

*Benjamin, Roger and Ori, Kan*, Tradition and Changes in Post-industrial Japan: The Role of the Political Parties (Praeger Publisher, 1981).

*Scalapino, Robert A.*, Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan (University of California Press, 1962).

This book should be read for its discussion of party politics in prewar Japan. It advances the argument that "Certainly there can be no doubt that democracy failed in prewar Japan," and endeavors "to find the most basic reasons for that failure" (p.394).

(2) *Literature Focussing Primarily on Individual Political Parties or the Relationship between Parties*

*Thayer, Nathaniel B.*, How the Conservative rule Japan (Princeton University Press, 1969)

This book analyses the intraparty politics of the LDP: how the president is chosen, how the cabinet is made, and how policies are formulated. The author argues that: "The factions have become essential to the political process. They choose who will rule the nation. If they did not exist, it is hard to imagine how

the cabinet would be chosen, how the other government and party positions would be filled” (p.305).

*Weinstein, Martine E.*, *The Human Face of Japan's Leadership: Twelve Portraits* (Praeger, 1989).

This book provides twelve portraits of leaders. One of these leaders is Katō, Kōichi, the chief secretary of the Miyazawa Cabinet as of 1992. The author interviewed Katō and the three other LDP leaders on their personal histories, political careers and their political views and prospects.

*Kishima, Takako*, *Political Life in Japan: Democracy in a Reversible World* (Princeton University Press, 1991).

In this book, the Liberal Democrats, Tanaka Kakuei, Nakasone Yasuhiro, Watananuki Tamisuke (the Secretary General of the LDP as of 1992), and others are taken as subjects for research. Political life in the conservative camp and the relationship between liberal democrats and opposition leaders are vividly described. This work is a pioneering work in English on Japanese politics from an anthropological perspective.

*Baerwald, Hans H.*, *The Purge of Japanese Leaders under the Occupation* (University of California Press, 1959).

Though some purged politicians returned to political life, it was this purge that made possible the full scale circulation of political elites. However the author also insists that “This shift in Occupation policy also had the ultimate effect of switching the objective of the purge from removing militarists and ultra-nationalists to removing Communists and their sympathizers” (p.99).

*Cole, A.B. Totten, G.O. and Uyehara, C.B.*, *Socialist Parties in Postwar Japan* (Yale University Press, 1966).

The authors argue that one of the major problems facing socialists in Japan is the lack of socialist unity, and that without unity there can only be preponderant conservatives (cf. p.453).

*Stockwin, J.A.A.*, *The Japanese Socialist Party and Neutralism: A Study of a Political Party and its Foreign Policy* (Melbourne University Press, 1968)

This book attempts to clarify Japanese socialists' conceptions of neutralism, and the nature of the party which espouses neutralist policies. The party's history is analysed.

The ideological core of the SDPJ is not socialism, but rather unarmed neutralism. This ideal, no matter how unrealistic, is said to shape the fundamental character of the SDPJ.

In *Stockwin, J.A.A. et al.*, *Dynamism and Immobilist Politics in Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 1988) "Parties, Politicians and the Political System" by Stockwin — a useful source on recent factional politics within the LDP.

*Scalapino, R.A.*, *The Japanese Communist Movement, 1920-1966* (University of California Press, 1987).

This book should be consulted for its analysis of the history of the Japan Communist Party. The author concludes that: "In the most fundamental sense, Japan is a post-Marxist society. Marxist doctrines, whether of economics or revolution, have less and less validity for this society as it joins the rank of the advanced nations of the world" (p.354).

*Langer, Paul E.*, *Communism in Japan: A Case of Political Naturalization* (Hoover Institute Press, 1972).

In this context 'naturalization' refers to independence from foreign influence, and the promotion of national interest. The author argues that "naturalization" has allowed the JCP to develop

a mass following.

(3) *Literature on the Japanese Political Background*

Sources on the Japanese Political Background will also be referred to in the “Further Readings” Sections at the end of each chapter.

*Johnson, Chalmers*, MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975 (Stanford University Press, 1982).

This book suggests that active government intervention and protection as expressed in the world famous or notorious “Administrative Guidance of MITI” made Japanese high economic growth, or the Japanese “economic miracle” possible. The Japanese system is characterized as “Japan, Inc.,” indicating the close relationship which exists between the government and big business. The Japanese system is described as something different not only from market oriented systems such as the United States, but also from ideological plan oriented systems such as characterizes the former Soviet Union.

*Wornoff, Jon*, Politics, the Japanese Way (Macmillan, 1986).

Japanese party politics is characterised by the author as a one-and-half party system composing an eternal ruling party and a perennial opposition (Chap.2). Institutionalized corruption and side-stepping of the constitution in Japanese politics is vividly described (Chap.8).

His recent work, *Japan as - - anything but - - Number One* (Macmillan, 1990) is a critical response to Vogel's *Japan as Number One* (Harvard University Press, 1979). He provides an insightful analysis of the political sphere, the quality of Japanese life (“if you can call that quality”), and welfare.

*Okimoto, Daniel and Rohlen, Thomas (ed)*, Inside the Japanese System : Readings on Contemporary Society and Political Economy. (Stanford University Press, 1988).

This book provides a useful set of readings in English on contemporary society and the political economy of Japan. It is composed primarily of extracts from many other highly evaluated books.

*Eccleston, Bernard*, State and Society in Post-War Japan (Polity Press, 1989).

This book analyses the economic and social life of Japan. Politics in contemporary Japan is also covered, especially in chap.5, "The Japanese Polity." The author argues that Japanese politics consists primarily of the dominant LDP and divided opposition. Bureaucrats, elected politicians, and representatives of big business occupy the center while labour, and other ordinary citizens' groups are kept on the periphery.

*Holstem, William J.* The Japanese Power Game. (Macmillan, 1990).

This book is more journalistic than academic. Part Two : Scandal is especially interesting. It describes the Recruit bribery scandal focusing on the central figure Ezoe, Hiromasa and his personal background. It also outlines the power struggle which took place between Kakuei Tanaka, Yasuhiro Nakasone and Shin Kanemaru over the privatization of the former NTT.

(4) *Literature on the Theoretical Analysis of Political Parties*

*Ostrogorski, Moiser Yakovlevich*, Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, 1902 (2 vols ed. by Lipset, S.M (Quadrangle Books, 1964)) are available)

This work made Ostrogorski's name, and has engendered his

reputation as one of the founders of modern political science.

It focusses on political organization in two representative democracies, Britain and the United States. For Ostrogorski, 'Organization' is the key to the essential corruption of modern societies, and is irreconcilable with individualism. He proposed the dissolution of all political parties.

*Michels, Robert*, *Zur Soziologie des Partei Wesens in der modernen Demokratie*, 2ed. 1922. (Translated into English as *Political Parties*, ed. by Lipset, S.M. ((Crowell-Collier, 1962)) (A Japanese translation is also available.)

Michels was educated in Germany, France and Italy. Though he became a member of the SPD, he had a strong syndicalist orientation. In Italy he was influenced by Gaetano Mosca and his doctrine of 'political elites'. Soon he published his classic theory 'the iron law of oligarchy' in *Political Parties* (First ed. 1911). After world war one and Mussolini's rise to power he joined the Fascist party.

Michel's work indicates a deep pessimism concerning the democratic management of mass organizations. It may be this pessimism which led him to his theory of the 'iron law of oligarchy' and eventually to Fascism.

*Duverger, Maurice*, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (Methuen, 1964). (originally published in French under the title "Les partis politiques" in 1951. A Japanese translation is available.)

The author, Duverger is the most renowned of modern French political scientists. The structures of parties, primarily in European societies, are analysed in Part I of this book. The party system is subjected to extended analysis from a broad range of per-



spectives, in Part II. This is a classic work which covers the two main dimensions of party sociology.

*Sartori, Giovanni*, Parties and Party Systems: A frame work analysis (Cambridge University Press, 1976).

This book is a major work dealing with political systems from a global and empirical perspective. His reference to party structure is also interesting, in particular, his comparative analysis of factional politics in Italian and Japanese political life (Refer to Chap.4 The party from within).

The author, Sartori was originally professor at a university in Italy. However he has since moved to a university in the USA.