

JAPAN

Date of Elections: December 27, 1969

Characteristics of Parliament

The Japanese Parliament (The Diet) is bicameral, consisting of two Houses:

— The House of Representatives, composed of 486 members, elected for 4 years and representing all the people.

— The House of Councillors, composed of 250 members, elected for 6 years, half of whom are renewed every 3 years. Under the terms of the Constitution, the Councillors are also the representatives of all the people.

On December 27, 1969, the Japanese went to the polls to renew the House of Representatives which had been prematurely dissolved by imperial decree on November 29, 1969, at the request of the Government.

Electoral System

All Japanese citizens of either sex are entitled to vote, provided they are at least 20 years old and registered on the electoral rolls which are revised annually in September and before each election.

Every Japanese citizen of either sex is eligible for the House of Representatives if he is at least 25 years old, and for the House of Councillors if he is at least 30 years old, on the condition that, in both cases, he is of sane mind, is neither imprisoned nor deprived of his civil rights as a result of legal sentence.

For the election of members of the House of Representatives, the country is divided into 123 constituencies. The number of Representatives to be elected in each constituency varies from 3 to 5, with the exception of the district of Anami Oshina which elects one member only.

Each elector votes for only one of the candidates in his constituency. Depending on the number of seats to be filled, those candidates are declared elected who have obtained the greatest number of votes, on the condition that this be equivalent to at least a quarter of the total of valid ballots cast, divided by the number of seats to be filled in the constituency.

150 members of the House of Councillors are elected from prefectural constituencies, each of which is entitled to 2 to 8 seats, according to the same system as that established for the election of Representatives, with the difference that, to be elected, the leading candidates must receive a number of votes equal to or greater than one-sixth of the total of valid ballots cast, divided by the number of seats to be filled from the constituency.

The remaining 100 Councillors are elected by the nation at large, the territory of the entire country forming one single constituency, the minimum number of votes required for a candidate to be elected being, in this case, one-eighth of the electoral quotient.

If a seat falls vacant while Parliament is sitting in the 3 months following the elections, it is filled by the next in line, provided that he has obtained the minimum number of ballots referred to above. If the vacancy arises more than 3 months after the elections or if several seats fall vacant in the same constituency, a by-election is then held.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Mr. Sato, Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, who had been forced by circumstances to dissolve the House in 1966, this time chose what he saw as the most favourable moment to go to the country. Wishing to capitalize on the diplomatic success scored by the signing of the Japan-US Treaty on the return of Okinawa in 1972, and also to avoid heated parliamentary discussion on the terms of this Treaty, he decided, on December 2, to have the House of Representatives dissolved by imperial edict. In doing this, he anticipated that the election would ensure his party a majority that would enable him to continue, without difficulty, the Japan-US alliance and to widen Japan's part in it.

Opposing the Government party, which had been in power for 24 years and was taking advantage of the country's economic boom, were four other parties: the Socialist Party, which favoured denouncing the Japan-US Security Treaty and was weakened by internal dissention; the Democratic Socialist Party, more moderate and wishing only to amend the Security Treaty, but also suffering an internal crisis; *Komeito*, or "Clean Government Party", a political branch of the *Sokagakkai* Buddhist sect; and the Communist Party, which hoped to double its representation by obtaining 10 seats. In addition, there were approximately 100 Independent candidates.

Although the Japan-US agreement of November 21 and its extensions caused discussions that were sometimes heated in political circles and the press, this debate scarcely reached the general public, and the campaign was largely calm — this being, perhaps, one of the reasons for the relatively weak turn-out on polling day.

The results of the voting amply fulfilled the hopes of Mr. Sato, whose party obtained 288 seats, 11 more than in the previous legislature. In fact, at the opening ceremony of the 63rd Special Session of the House on January 14, the Liberal Democratic Party counted 300 representatives, 12 Independent members having rejoined its ranks. However, the results revealed the collapse of the Japan Socialist Party which recorded defeats not only in the rural

areas in which it was weak, but also in the large industrial towns where its support had previously been solid.

The *Komeito* party gained 22 seats, thus replacing the Democratic Socialists as the second opposition party. Recently formed and growing in stature, *Komeito* revealed by its success that it is now strong in popular circles in the cities where it recruits the majority of its supporters. The Communist Party has also made considerable progress, winning 9 more seats than in the previous Parliament.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the House of Representatives

Number of registered voters	69,260,424
Voters	47,442,400 (65 %)
Void or blank ballot papers	452,507
Valid votes	46,989,893

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the House of Representatives
Liberal Democratic Party	328	22,381,570	47.63	288 (+11)
Socialist Party	183	10,074,101	21.44	90 (-50)
<i>Komeito</i> (Clean Govern- ment Party)	7(1)	5,124,666	10.91	47 (+22)
Democratic Socialist Party	68	3,636,591	7.74	31 (+1)
Communist Party	123	3,199,032	6.81	14 (+9)
Independents	130	2,492,560	5.30	16 (+7)
Others	37	81,373	0.17	0 -
				486

2. *Distribution of Seats according to Parliamentary Groups*

	House of Representatives
Liberal Democratic Group.	300
Socialist Group.	90
<i>Komeito</i> Group.	47
Democratic Socialist Group.	32
Communist Group.	14
Independents.	3
	486

3. *Distribution of Members of the House of Representatives according to Professional Category*

Officers of organizations.	198
Officers of companies.	88
Officers of political parties.	39
State Ministers, Parliamentary Vice-Ministers, etc.	32
Lawyers.	31
Officers of the House.	18
Farmers.	10
Physicians.	10
Teachers.	8
Writers.	6
Others.	46
	486

4. *Distribution of Representatives according to Sex*

	Democratic	,,	<i>Komeito</i>	Socialist	,,	Independents	
Men	285	88	45	31	13	16	= 478
Women . . .	3	2	2	0	1	0	= 8
							486

5. *Distribution of Representatives according to Age Group*

25-29 years.	4
30-39 years.	39
40-49 years.	107
50-59 years.	160
60-69 years.	135
Over 70 years.	41
	486

6. *Average Age: 55 years*