

JAPAN

Date of Elections: December 10, 1972

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held to renew all the members of the House of Representatives, prematurely dissolved by imperial decree on November 13, 1972, at the request of the Government. As the previous general elections for the House of Representatives were held on December 27, 1969, normal expiry thereof was to have been on December 26, 1973.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Japan, the Diet, consists of 2 Houses:

- The House of Representatives, composed of 491 members elected for 4 years. This total, because of the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in May 1972, increased by 5 from the last general elections;
- The House of Councillors, composed of 250 members elected for 6 years, half of whom are renewed every 3 years.

Members of both Houses are considered representatives of all the people.

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 lists, which are revised annually in September and before each election. Voting is not compulsory.

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, on the condition that, in both cases, he be of sane mind and neither imprisoned nor deprived of his civil rights as a result of a legal sentence.

Except for the posts of Prime Minister, State Minister, Chief Cabinet Secretary, Director General of the Prime Minister's office, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary and Parliamentary Vice-Minister of a Ministry, a member of the Diet may not hold any official post in the employ of the State or in any local public entity, nor any post of officer or member of the staff of a public corporation. A member of the Diet may not furthermore concurrently hold posts in both Houses.

For the election of members of the House of Representatives, the country is divided into 124 constituencies. The number of Representatives to be elected in each varies from 3 to 5, with the exception of the single-member district of Anami Oshina.

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 particular constituency.

Of the 250 members of the House of Councillors, 150 members are elected from prefectural constituencies, each of which is entitled to from 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 of the same list, provided that he has obtained the basic percentage 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

Prime Minister Tanaka, who came to office in July 1972 as head of a coalition of factions within the conservative Liberal-Democratic Party, called for premature dissolution of the House of Representatives 5 months after taking power, although his own party had a wide parliamentary majority.

The election campaign, legally restricted to 30 days, was costly and generally calm. The Liberal-Democratic Party, which had been in power since the end of World War II, sought public reinforcement of its advocacy of closer ties with the People's Republic of China and plan for the economic and social development of the western Japanese shore. Of the 4 Opposition parties, the Left especially denounced the continuing military alliance with the United States, attacked the Government for increasing defense expenditure and, domestically, emphasized the problems of inflation, insufficient social security and welfare and pollution, the last of which, it claimed, would by no means be alleviated by Mr. Tanaka's plan for "remodelling the Japanese islands".

Although the turnout of voters was higher than in 1969, it was smaller in the big cities, as it had always been, than in rural regions. While the Liberal-Democratic Party itself won less seats than at the previous election, 9 successful independent candidates joined its ranks on December 11. Nevertheless, the Opposition parties together won more than 200 of the 491 seats at stake, reflecting the setback suffered by the conservative party. The most impressive advance was by the Communist Party, the nation's oldest; its unprecedented 38 seats not only made it the second largest opposition party but earned it a seat on the Diet Steering Committee and a right to propose bills on its own. The Socialist Party, for its part, won 118 seats. Moderate elements represented by the *Komeito* and Democratic Socialist parties, however, lost heavily in the urban centres.

Mr. Tanaka was re-elected head of the Government on December 22.

Statistics

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

Number of registered voters.	73,769,637
Voters.	52,934,894 (71.8 %)
Void or blank ballot papers.	509,815
Valid votes.	52,425,079

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Distribution of Seats as a Result of the 1972 Elections	Number of Seats in the House of Representatives
Liberal-Democratic Party	339	24,563,199	46.85	271	284
Japan Socialist Party	161	11,478,742	21.90	118	118
Japan Communist Party	122	5,496,828	10.49	38	39
<i>Komeito</i>	59	4,436,756	8.46	29	29
Japan Democratic Socialist Party	65	3,660,953	6.98	19	20
Independents	134	2,645,582	5.05	14	1
Others	15	143,019	0.27	_2	
				491	491*

* Distribution of seats by party on the day of convocation of the 71st special session taking into account the post-election change of party affiliation of 15 members.

** Due to the reversion of Okinawa to Japan, the House of Representatives had 5 more seats in 1969.

*** There were 14 vacancies at the time of dissolution.

Japan

2. *Distribution of Representatives according to Professional Category*

Officials of organizations.	183
Officials of political parties.	70
Officials of corporations.	68
State Ministers, Parliamentary Vice-Ministers, etc.	34
Lawyers.	28
Officers of the Diet	18
Farmers.	13
Physicians.	10
Teachers.	7
Writers.	7
Others.	52
	491

3. *Distribution of Representatives according to Sex*

	Liberal- Demo- cratic Party	Socialist Party	Communist Party	•	Dem- ocratic Socialist Party	Inde- pendents	=	
Men.	269	116	36	29	19	13	2	= 484
Women	2	2	2	0	0	10		= 7
								491

4. *Distribution of Representatives according to Age Group*

25-29.	1
30-39.	30
40-49.	117
50-59.	156
60-69.	142
70 and over.	45
	491

5. *Average Age: 55 years and 9 months*