

JAPAN

Date of Elections: December 5, 1976

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Representatives on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Japan, the Diet, consists of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors.

The House of Representatives is composed of 511 members elected for 4 years. This total was increased by 20 since the previous (1972) general elections.

The House of Councillors comprises 252 members, elected for 6 years, half of whom are renewed every 3 years.

Electoral System

All Japanese citizens who are at least 20 years old are entitled to vote unless they have been adjudged incompetent and have yet to complete or start execution of a sentence of confinement or more severe punishment, or have been convicted of electoral offences.

Electoral registers are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory. Proxy voting is allowed for illiterate or physically incapacitated electors.

Qualified electors who are 25 years of age or over are eligible for the House of Representatives; the age qualification for the House of Councillors is 30. A member of the Diet cannot concurrently hold any official post in the Government or in any local public entity, or any post of officer or member of the staff of a public corporation, except the post of Prime Minister, State Minister, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, Deputy Director General of the Prime Minister's Office, Parliamentary Vice-Minister or where otherwise provided by law; provided, however, that a member may, during his term of office, be appointed as a member of a commission, advisor, counsellor or other functionary of similar nature in any executive branch of the Cabinet.

A candidate for the House of Representatives must make a monetary deposit of 1,000,000 *yen* (approximately US\$3,300), which is forfeited if he

does not obtain at least one-fifth of the number resulting from division of the total of valid ballots by the fixed number of members in the constituency concerned.

For election of Representatives, Japan is divided into 130 districts. The number of members to be elected in each varies from 3 to 5, with the exception of one single-member district.

Each elector votes for only one of the candidates in his district. Depending on the number of seats to be filled, those candidates are declared elected who have obtained the most votes, provided that this total is equivalent to at least one-fourth of the number resulting from division of the total of valid votes cast in the constituency by the number of seats to be filled.

Of the 252 members of the House of Councillors, 152 members are elected from prefectural constituencies, each of which is entitled to from two to eight 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.

A Diet seat which falls vacant within three months of an election is filled by the " next-in-line " candidate of the same party, provided that he obtained the statutory number of votes. A by-election is held in other cases or if several seats become vacant in the same constituency.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The election date was officially announced on November 15, 1976.

During the three-week campaign, a key issue discussed by rival factions of the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), led by Prime Minister (since 1974) T. Miki and Mr. T. Fukuda, concerned the so-called " Lockheed payoff scandal ". Major opponents of the conservative LDP included the Japan Socialist Party, also divided into factions; the *Komeito*, or " Clean Government Party ", which sought to attract " floating " voters by emphasizing the need to improve the quality of life, to combat pollution and to protect the environment; and the Japan Communist Party. Debates over pollution, as well as inflation and rising medical, housing and utility costs all arose during the campaign. While the opposition was united on certain questions, efforts to achieve closer co-operation were only partly successful.

On election day, the LDP lost its overall parliamentary majority as several moderate reform groups, especially *Komeito*, made significant gains; the former thereafter nevertheless enlisted 11 independent members to re-establish its dominant position, yet still fell short by 11 seats of the total needed to control all House of Representatives standing committees.

Mr. Fukuda, whose faction had obtained 51 Representatives seats, was elected Prime Minister by the Diet on December 24.

Statistics

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

Number of registered voters.	77,926,588	
Voters.	57,231,992	(73.44%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	619,227	
Valid votes.	56,612,765	

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Distribution of Seats as a result of the 1976 Elections
Liberal Democratic Party	320	23,653,626	41.78	249
Japan Socialist Party	162	11,713,009	20.69	123
<i>Komeito</i>	84	6,177,300	10.91	55
Japan Communist Party.	128	5,878,192	10.38	17
Democratic Socialist Party.	61	3,554,076	6.28	29
New Liberal Club*	25	2,363,985	4.18	17
Other Groups	17	45,114	0.08	—
Independents	112	3,227,463	5.70	21
				511**

* New party

** 20 seats added since last elections

••• Distribution of seats on the day of convocation of the 79th special session of the
into account the post-election party affiliation of 15 independent **members**.

*** **Plus** one vacancy

**** **Plus** 17 vacancies

2. *Distribution of Representatives according to Professional Category*

Directors of associations or organizations . . .	207
Officials of political parties	64
Members of executive boards of corporations	51
Ministers and Parliamentary Vice-Ministers, etc.	36
Lawyers.	26
Officers of the Diet	18
Teachers.	11
Doctors.	10
Farmers.	10
Writers.	6
Others.	<u>72</u>
	511

3. *Distribution of Representatives according to Sex*

Men	505
Women.	6
	511

4. *Distribution of Representatives according to Age Group*

25-29 years.	3
30-34.	7
35-39. i	30
40-44.	43
45-49.	71
50-54.	101
55-59.	91
60-64.	69
65-69.	55
70 and over.	41
	511