

JAPAN

Date of Elections: 18 December 1983

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Representatives following premature dissolution of this body on 28 November 1983. General elections had previously been held on 22 June 1980.

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.

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 if their domicile has been recorded in a constituency for at least three months and unless they have been adjudged incompetent or have yet to complete or start a sentence of confinement or more severe punishment. Any person who has been sentenced to punishment for electoral offences has neither voting rights nor electoral eligibility for a period fixed in accordance with the punishment.

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. However, 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, on a concurrent decision of both Houses. The office of member of the Diet is compatible with 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.

A candidate for the House of Representatives must make a monetary deposit of 2,000,000 yen (approximately US\$8,403), 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 three to five, 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 proportional representation based on the d'Hondt system.

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 had 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 Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

On 2 November 1983, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone (Liberal Democratic Party - **LDP**) decided to dissolve Parliament and to hold general elections the following month. This move was aimed at breaking the political deadlock that resulted from the bribery conviction of former LDP Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka.

During the two-week election campaign, Prime Minister Nakasone focused primarily on the issues of administrative (including educational) reform and the domestic economy (including promise of a tax cut). Predictably, the question of political ethics was emphasized by the main opposition parties, notably the Japan Socialist Party and *Komeito*. A total of 848 candidates vied for the House of Representatives' 511 seats.

On polling day, the conservative LDP suffered a net loss of 36 seats to arrive at a total of 250. The Socialist Party, meanwhile, picked up 11 seats and *Komeito* registered 24 gains. Analysts attributed the LDP's losses in part to a low voter turnout. Despite this reversal, Mr. Nakasone remained in office, forming a coalition with the New Liberal Club on 26 December. On 20 December, the LDP had regained its absolute parliamentary majority when eight independent Deputies joined its ranks.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	84,252,608	
Voters.	57,238,897	(67.9%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	459,196	
Valid votes.	56,779,701	

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).	339	25,982,785	45.76	250	284	286
Japan Socialist Party	144	11,065,082	19.49	112	107	101
<i>Komeito</i>	59	5,745,751	10.12	58	33	34
Japan Democratic Socialist Party.	54	4,129,907	7.27	38	<i>j2</i>	31
Japan Communist Party . . .	129	5,302,485	9.34	26	29	29
New Liberal Club	17	1,341,584	2.36	9	12	10
United Socialist Democratic Party.	4	381,045	0.67			
Other parties.	18	62,323	0.11			
Independents.	84	2,768,735	4.88	<u>16</u>	<u>11</u>	
				511	511	498'

'Plus 13 vacancies.

Note: The strength of political parties in the House of Representatives as of 26 December 1983, the day of convocation of the 101st (special) session of the Diet, was as follows:

	Number of Seats
Liberal Democratic Party - New Liberal Club	266
Japan Socialist Party.	112
<i>Komeito</i> - National Council.	59
Japan Democratic Socialist Party.	39
Japan Communist Party.	27
United Socialist Democratic Party.	3
Independents.	<u>5</u>
	511

*2. Distribution of Representatives according
to Professional Category*

Officers of political parties	165
Executives of associations or organizations	153
Members of executive boards of corporations	58
Lawyers.	32
Ministers and Parliamentary Vice-Ministers, etc.	28
Agriculture, forestry.	20
Education.	14
Doctors.	8
Writers.	4
Others.	9
No profession.	20
	511

3. Distribution of Representatives according to Sex

	503
Women.	8
	511

4. Distribution of Representatives according to Age Group

25-29 years	4
30-34.	24
35-39.	45
40-44.	59
45-49.	80
50-54.	130
55-59.	64
60-64.	53
65-69.	52
70 and over.	52
	511