

Democracy in Theory and Practice

The Politics of Confrontation in 1950s

-Liberal/Democratic Party (LDP)
vs. Japan Socialist Party (JSP) and JCP

L/DP	vote %;	seat %	JSP	vote %;	seats%	JCP	vote %;	seats
1952	66	70	21	24	2.5	0		
1953	66	66	27	30	2	1		
1955	63	64	29	33	2	2		
1958	58	62	33	36	2.5	1		
1960	58	63	36	35	3	3		

Need $\frac{2}{3}$ for constitutional revision

-2017 pro-revision forces (LDP/Kōmeitō coalition+Nippon
Ishin no kai): 342/475 (H. Rep), 163/242 (H. Co.)

The Politics of Confusion

A haiku from the 90s...

クリントン
一人の間に
七総理

During the time

Of just one Clinton

Seven Prime Ministers

11 Prime Ministers in 2 Decades

- Kaifu Toshiki 1989.8-1991.11 (LDP)
- Miyazawa Kiichi 1991.11-1993.8 (LDP)
- Hosokawa Morihiro 1993.8-1994.4 (non-LDP coal.)
- Hata Tsutomu 1994.4-1994.6 (non-LDP coal.)
- Murayama Tomiichi 1994.6-1996.1 (JSP-LDP coal.)
- Hashimoto Ryūtarō 1996.1-1998.7 (LDP)
- Obuchi Keizō 1998.7-2000.4 (LDP)
- Mori Yoshihiro 2000.4-2001.4 (LDP)
- Koizumi Junichirō 2001.4-2006.9 (LDP)
- Abe Shinzō 2006.9-2007.9 (LDP)
- Fukuda Yasuo 2007.9-2008.9 (LDP)
- Asō Tarō 2008.9-2009.9 (LDP)
- Hatoyama Yukio 2009.9-2010.6 (DPJ)
- Kan Naoto 2010.6-2011.9 (DPJ)

Disintegration of LDP Majority

- Corruption: Locked Incident (1974), “Recruit Incident” (1988), “Sagawa Express Incident” (1992)
- Discontent with LDP hegemony
 - Unequal distribution of wealth
 - Reliance on rural vote through gerrymandering
 - Reliance on organizational vote

Losing Elections

- 1989: Loss of House of Councilors (upper house) for the first time due to financial/sex scandals and introduction of unpopular tax
- 1993: Opposition's "vote of no confidence" passes with support of LDP defectors lead by Ozawa Ichirō
 - Rise of first non-LDP government since 1947
 - PM Hosokawa Morihiro (Konoe Fumimaro's grandson)

LDP Comeback (Sort of)

- June 1994: LDP-JSP(!) coalition under Socialist PM Murayama Tomiichi
- 1996: LDP-only government formed
 - Opposition coalesce into Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)
- LDP back in government but still weak

“Koizumi Reforms”

- “I’ll break down the LDP if that’s what it takes.”
- Reforming financial sector for economic recovery
- Privatizing postal system: \$3 trillion of savings

Good Timing?

- GDP grows
- Unemployment: 5.5% (2002) to 4.2% (2006)
- Tokyo Stock Exchange: from \$140 to \$160

Anomaly Among the 11 PMs

- Second longest term since Meiji: 2001-2006, 5.5 yrs
- September 2005: LDP landslide in the “Postal Reform Election” > wins 296 of 480 seats in lower h.
- Opposition sunk into oblivion by “Koizumi Theater”

Post-Koizumi Anxiety

- Critique of “neo-liberal” Koizumi reforms
- Growing socioeconomic inequality in a “stratified society”:
 - Emergence of winners/losers
 - Education
 - Income
- Growing sense of insecurity

Towards a Two-Party System(?)

- Koizumi followed by three unpopular LDP PMs
- 2007 upper house election: DPJ majority
- 2009.9 lower house election: DJP landslide
 - 308 out of 480 (bigger than Koizumi's 2005 victory)
 - Promise reform with safety net; primacy of politicians over bureaucracy; assertive stance viz U.S.
 - PM Hatoyama Ichirō resigns in 8 months
 - PM Kan Naoto succeeds, only to lose upper house majority in July, 2010.
 - Heavily criticized for post-earthquake response and resigns
 - LDP comeback in another landslide in 2012: Abe 2.0
 - On course to beat Koizumi's record (5.5 yrs)?

Abe Shinzō: “IlLiberal Revisionist” (or the Last Liberal Standing?)



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