

# **JAPANESE POLITICAL PARTIES**



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# Ruling and opposition

## RULING COALITION

- Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) – largest ruling party
- New Komeito (Clean Party)

## OPPOSITION

- Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) – largest opposition party
- Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDP)
- Japanese Communist Party (JCP)

## Strength of Political Groups in both houses

	Before election		After election	
	HOR	HOC	HOR	HOC
Liberal Democratic Party	212	114	296	112
New Komeito	34	24	31	24
(Ruling coalition in total)	(246)	(138)	(327)	
People's New Party (LDP rebels) (Kokumin shinto)	4	-	4	3
New Party Japan (LDP rebels) (Nippon)	3	-	1	
Independent rebels	30	-	13	
Democratic Party of Japan and Club of Independents	175	84	113	82
Japanese Communist Party	9	9	9	9
Social Democratic Party	6	6	7	6
Independents	4	5	6	5
Vacancy				1
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>242</b> <sup>3</sup>



## Liberal Democratic Party

- Established in **November 1955** through the merger of the Liberal Party and the Japan Democratic Party
- **The LDP held uninterrupted power in Japan from 1955 until 1993, when it briefly lost government to an eight-party coalition**
- **The LDP returned to power in June 1994** as the major partner in a coalition with the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDP)
- **Since 1998 it has strengthened its position in the Diet by forming a coalition with New Komeito**
- **The current party president is Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.** He was elected as party president in 2001.
- The party will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its founding in November 2005



# New Komeito

Komeito originally formed in **1964**

**the political wing of Soka Gakkai**

Komeito merged with other parties in 1994 to form the New Frontier Party, but split off again and eventually joined with the New Peace Party in 1998 to become New Komeito.

**In October 1999, New Komeito joined the coalition government, then led by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi**

**since April 2001, it has been part of the Koizumi coalition government.**

At least one ministerial post is given to one of New Komeito members.



# THE OPPOSITION

## Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)

The Democratic Party of Japan was established in May 1998 from a merger of four parties

The DPJ aims for a two political party system

## The Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDP)

Established in 1945, the Social Democratic Party of Japan (previously known as the Japan Socialist Party)

Party Chairman Tomiichi Murayama became the first socialist prime minister of Japan.

## The Japanese Communist Party (JCP)

Formed in 1922,

The Party accepts the democratic parliamentary system in Japan but styles itself on "scientific socialism".

# Major LDP policies

## LDP aims for a party reform

The LDP headed by the National Vision Project Committee of the National Strategy Headquarters launched a party reform project and drafted a proposal under the name of “Political System on 13 March 2002.

- Regain **public confidence through a new election system**
- **Convert bureaucratic-dominated decision system must be converted into politics-dominated decision system**
- **Become a permanent member of the UNSC**

# Major DPJ policies

## Japan Revival Vision for 2015

Party President Okada released his “Japan Revival Vision for 2015” on 25 August. The vision is targeted for the period of eight years after the DPJ takes power within a couple of years.

- Regain public confidence in politics
- Set up a **sustainable social welfare system**
- Transfer central government powers to municipalities
- Become a **permanent member of the UNSC**
- Realize **normalization between Japan and DPRK** after resolving nuclear and abduction issues
- Age for eligible voters to be raised to **18 years old**
- Provide Child Allowance to families with children under 18 years old

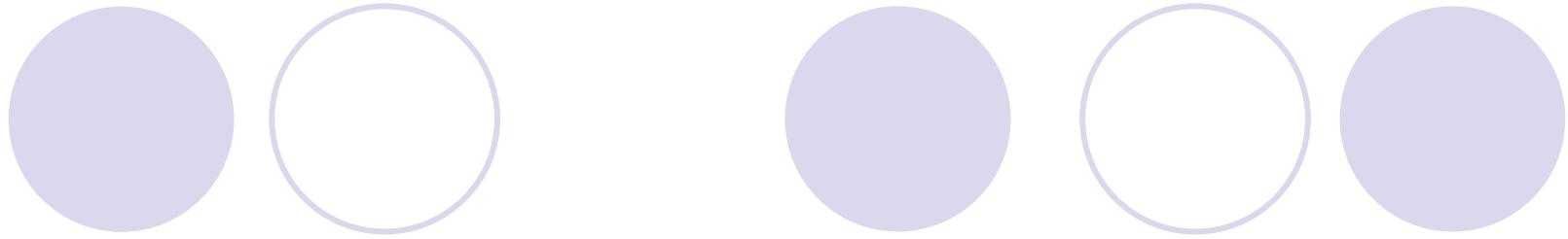


## Two-political party system? Political realignment?

- The LDP has been in power since 1955 except for the period between 9 August in 1993 and 8 April 1994 when **Hosokawa cabinet** was formed.
- Hosokawa cabinet was formed by all opposition parties except JCP - stop LDP's absolute majority one-party rule.
- The party was short-lived because Hosokawa coalition cabinet had quickly lost its centripetal force - prime minister Hosokawa's involvement in money scandals.

**The DPJ must win a majority of seat in the next general election!!!**

**LDP and DPJ form a large coalition and then is divided into two major parties by policies (i.e. constitutional reform, education reform, structural reform)  
⇒ POLITICAL REALIGNMENT**



# 2005 General Election

# 2005 General Election

- LDP won 296 seats: the largest share in postwar politics
- Ruling coalition now commands two-thirds of the seats in HOR (327 seats) - more than a two-thirds majority in the lower house. This allows them to pass legislative bills without the consent of the upper house
- DPJ won 113 seats against 175 seats

# 2005 General election result

Seats decided											
	LDP	DPJ	KOM	JCP	SDP	PNP	NPN	MIN	IND	REB	Total
Single	219	52	8	0	1	2	0	0	18	13	300
Prop	77	61	23	9	6	2	1	1	0	0	180
Total	296	113	31	9	7	4	1	1	18	13	480
Pre	212	177	34	9	5	4	3	1	32	30	477

LDP = Liberal Democratic Party

PNP = People's New Party

DPJ = Democratic Party of Japan

NPN = New Party Nippon

KOM = Komeito

MIN = Minor parties

JCP = Japanese Communist Party

IND = Independents

SDP = Social Democratic Party

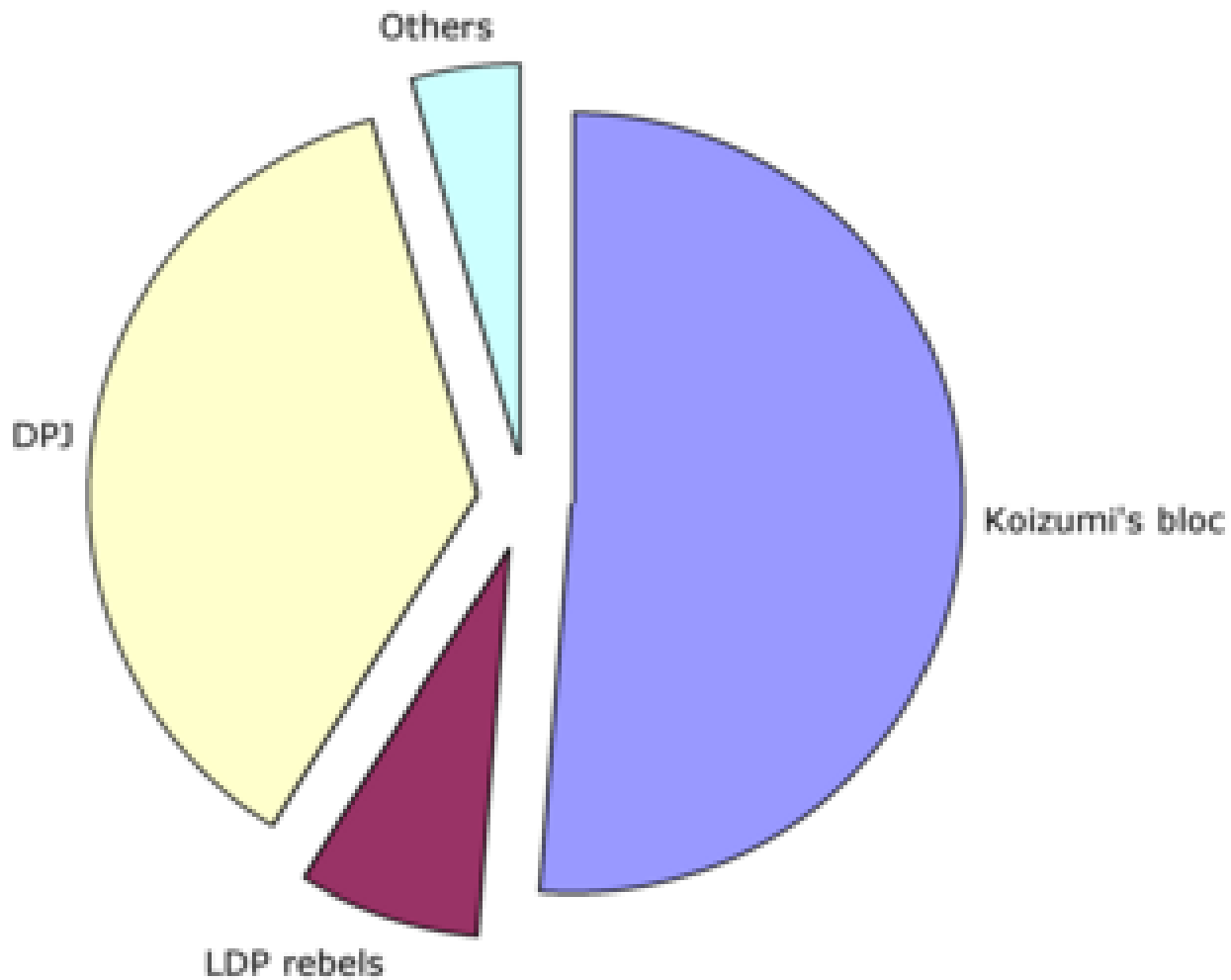
REB = Postal privatization rebels

S = single-seat constituencies

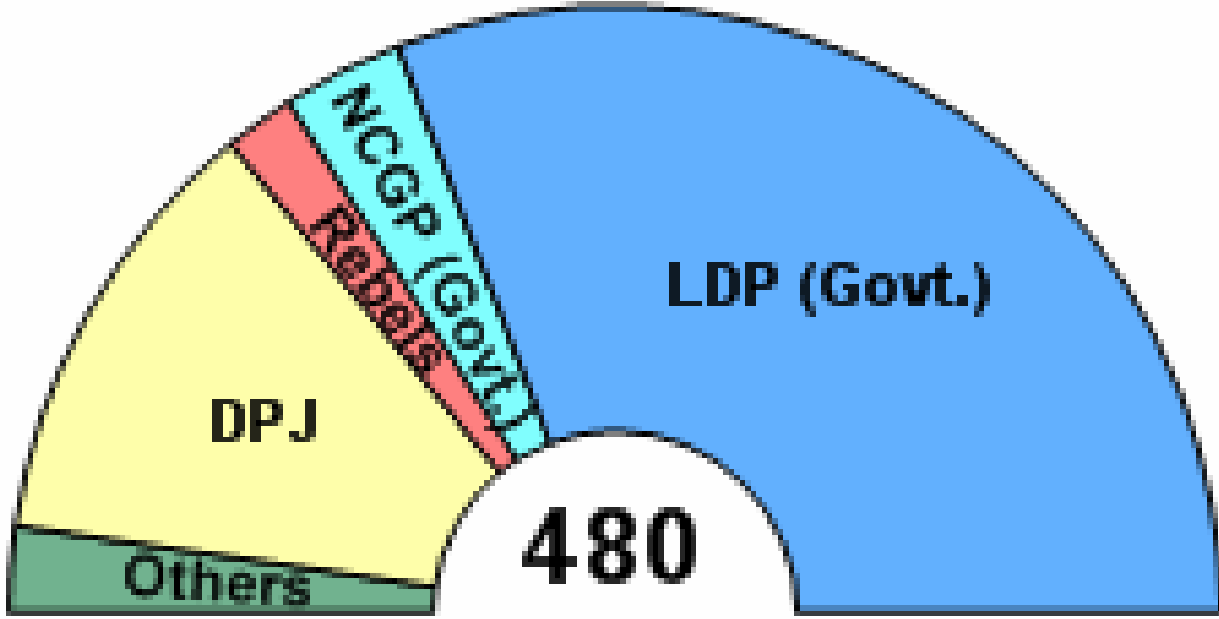
P = proportional representation seats

Pre = pre-election seats

# Seats prior to the election



● ○ **Elected seats** ○ ●





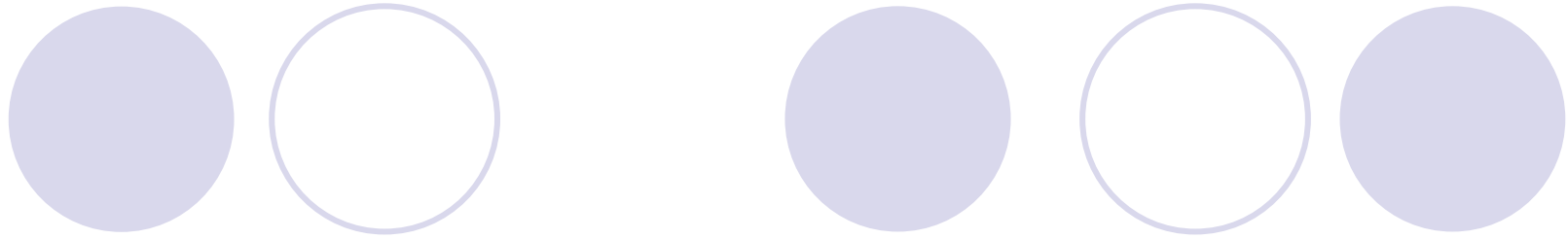
# Election analysis

- **Koizumi (LDP) vs. Okada (DPJ)**  
**Koizumi: a referendum on the privatization of Japan Post \***  
**Okada: did not have a clear position on the privatization issue**
- **Assassins**  
**20 were elected (9 defeated rebels in single-seat constituencies, 11 were elected by proportional representation, 5 'assassins' failed to be elected)**
- **Independent voters**  
**Urban areas - the LDP had a devastating victory**

# Questions

- Question 1: In the 9/11 general election, the LDP, together with its coalition partner Komeito, has secured the absolute majority in the lower house (two-thirds of the seats). What are the major reasons for this landslide victory and why is a majority of Japanese voters choose the LDP rather than the DPJ (major opposition party)?
- Question 2. Koizumi's tenure as president of the LDP ( as well as the prime minister) will expire in one year. He insists that he will not remain in the post. Who will be the next president of the LDP as well as the prime minister of Japan and what are major issues surrounding post-Koizumi?
- Question 3: Is there a prospect of a two-party political system in Japan while the LDP (in the form of a coalition government) continues to dominate a majority of the lower house?





**END OF LECTURE**

**(JAPANESE POLITICAL PARTIES)**