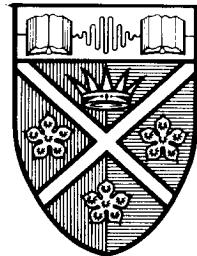


# STRATHCLYDE PAPERS ON GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

---



## *THE SELECTION OF THE PARTY LEADER – JAPANESE STYLE*

*by*

*Malcolm Punnett*

*No. 85*

*1992*

**STRATHCLYDE PAPERS ON GOVERNMENT AND  
POLITICS**

**(Series Editor, David Judge)**

**No. 85**

**THE SELECTION OF THE PARTY  
LEADER - JAPANESE STYLE**

**By**

**Malcolm Punnett  
(University of Strathclyde)**

**ISSN 0264-1496  
© 1992 Punnett**

**Department of Government  
University of Strathclyde  
GLASGOW G1 1XQ  
Scotland U.K.**

**UNIVERSITY OF  
STRATHCLYDE LIBRARIES**

### *Party Leader - Japanese Style*

A key determinant of the character of a political party is the 'balance of influence' that is achieved between the party elite and the rank and file.<sup>1</sup> Modern concepts of participatory democracy require that party members be involved to some degree in the various procedures of the party. While elites may give formal recognition to such demands by the members, the elites are nevertheless likely to seek to retain for themselves a decisive role in the party's affairs. The question of just how much influence the party members should be able to exert, and how much control should remain with the party notables, is not easily resolved.

The issue is as significant in the process through which the party selects its leader as in any other aspect of party organisation. Leader-selection methods range from extremely 'closed' procedures, in which the choice of leader is made by a small group of notables through informal processes, to very 'open' procedures, in which all the party members are directly involved, perhaps through a secret-ballot. Within this broad range, particular leader-selection methods will achieve a different balance between the growing demands of the rank and file to be involved in the leader-selection process and the desire of the senior party figures to determine the succession.

In recent years a number of parties have experienced conflict between the competing pressures of member-involvement and elite-management. In Britain since 1965 each of the main parties has increased the number of people involved in the leader-selection process.<sup>2</sup> A number of continental European countries have also democratised their selection procedures in face of demands for greater participation by the party members.<sup>3</sup> In the United States

### *Party Leader - Japanese Style*

the methods used to select delegates to the parties' Presidential conventions have become more open, with the bulk of delegates now being chosen through primary elections.<sup>4</sup> In face of such trends towards greater 'openness', 'participation' and 'intra-party democracy', to what extent have elites been able to retain control of the process of selecting the leader?

One aspect of this question is illustrated by the leadership contest of the Japanese Liberal-Democrat party (LDP) in October 1991. The LDP could reasonably be described as being 'traditionally elitist' in disposition and 'conservative' in its attitude towards the concept of intra-party democracy.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, although the LDP's leader-selection process has traditionally been dominated by the leading Parliamentary figures, the party has attempted in recent years to come to terms with trends apparent elsewhere by giving the party members a limited role in the selection of the leader. In this paper the 1991 LDP leadership contest is examined against the background of the history of leader-selection in the party. The principal issue under consideration is to what extent the leader-selection procedure has succeeded in reconciling the competing demands of elite management and intra-party democracy.

#### **LDP Leaders 1956-91**

LDP leaders do not enjoy great security of tenure. As is shown in Table 1, the LDP in 1991 was selecting its fifteenth leader (and thus, as it has been the sole party of government, Japan's fifteenth Prime Minister) since its formation in 1955. Until 1971 LDP leaders could serve anunlimited number of two-year terms in office but in 1971,

*Party Leader - Japanese Style*

TABLE I

**LDP Leaders 1956-91**

		<b>Reason for Leaving Office</b>
1956	Hatoyama	Resigned in face of criticism of policies
1956-7	Ishibashi	Ill-health
1957-60	Kishi	Resigned in face of criticism of policies
1960-4	Ikeda	Ill-health
1964-72	Sato	Retired voluntarily
1972-4	Tanaka	Resigned over financial scandal
1974-6	Miki	Resigned after electoral setback
1976-8	Fukuda	Defeated in leadership contest
1978-80	Ohira	Died in office
1980-2	Suzuki	Resigned in face of criticism of policies
1982-7	Nakasone	End of term of office
1987-9	Takeshita	Resigned over financial scandal
1989	Uno	Resigned after electoral setback
1989-91	Kaifu	Retired in face of rejection of policies

during Sato's fourth term, a limit of two terms was introduced for the future. Since then, however, only Nakasone has lasted for two terms (and, exceptionally, he was also granted an additional year in office). All other LDP leaders have served for a single two-year term, or less.

Few LDP leaders have left the post voluntarily. Only Nakasone (1987) and Sato (1982) retired 'normally' after a full spell in office. Two others retired because of ill health (Ikeda 1964 and Ishibashi 1957), while one died in office (Ohira, 1980). The other nine leaders have been forced from office in one way or another. Fukuda was defeated in a leadership contest after two years in office. Tanaka (1974) and Takeshita (1989) resigned because of their involvement in financial scandals, while Miki (1976) and Uno (1989) resigned when the party suffered electoral setbacks under their leadership. Four others (Hatoyama 1956, Kishi 1960, Suzuki 1982 and Kaifu 1991) resigned, or decided not to seek re-election, in face of party criticisms of their policies or performance in office.

In all since 1956, Sato survived as LDP leader for eight years, Nakasone for five, Ikeda for four and Kishi for three, but each of the other ten lasted for no more than two years. A period of relative stability between 1957 and 1972, when there were only three leaders, has been followed by twenty years in which only one leader (Nakasone) survived more than two years.

The high turnover rate of the LDP leaders clearly cannot be explained by electoral failure. The LDP has been in office continuously since 1956 and has usually had an overall majority of seats in both

### *Party Leader - Japanese Style*

houses of the Diet. Relative electoral failure does explain in part the replacement of Miki in 1976 (after the LDP had lost its overall majority in the lower house for the first time) and Uno in 1989 (after the party had lost its majority in the upper house for the first time). Otherwise, LDP leaders have presided over a succession of electoral successes.

While the party's two-term limit (introduced in 1971) cannot account for the actual one-term norm, the fact that such a limit does exist perhaps encourages the party to think of the post of leader as a short-term appointment. A pattern of one-term leaders, once established, becomes self-reinforcing, unless a leader of Nakasone's stature is able to interrupt the pattern. Further, LDP leaders have been somewhat accident-prone. Death, ill-health and revelations of financial malpractice have accounted for five changes of leader, while sexual scandal contributed to a sixth.

Regardless of the factors that have produced the regular removal of leaders from office, how have the new leaders been selected? The selection of successive LDP leaders has been characterised, first, by the variety of procedures that have been used, but second by the commanding role that normally has been played by the leaders of the several factions of which the LDP is composed, regardless of the formal procedure that has been used.<sup>6</sup>

Initially the LDP's factions were simply loose collections of lieutenants gathered around a leader. For the purpose of the 1956 leadership contest, however, the membership and organisation of the

### *Party Leader - Japanese Style*

factions were extended to embrace all LDP members of the Diet. As expressed by one commentator:<sup>7</sup>

"[the factions] became like army 'divisions', headed by a 'general' who was advised by his 'General Staff' ... the factions became institutionalised, and, because of that change, became able to perform some of the functions of parties in a coalition cabinet system of government."

The factions are of fundamental importance in all aspects of the LDP's organisation and procedures. They are based on personal connections rather than ideology. Each faction bears the name of its leader, who exerts vast authority over his members. In part this is because he is in a position to distribute patronage to the members but he also benefits from the deference to authority that characterises Japanese political and social life. Each faction has a clear hierarchy, usually with a recognised heir apparent. Thus the death or retirement of a faction leader does not necessarily result in changes in the structure or membership of the faction. When Abe died in May 1991, for example, 'his' faction was inherited, more or less intact, by Mitsuzuka.

The factions share an over-riding loyalty to the party as a whole: they are essentially factions *within* the LDP rather than independent parties in their own right. Nevertheless, each faction recruits its own members, often by paying their membership fees. They compete for patronage and influence, raise funds independently of each other and often run candidates against each other in Diet elections (with Japan's multi-member constituencies making 'controlled competition' quite feasible).<sup>8</sup> The factions now extend beyond the Diet to the rank and file of the party and, in an informal way, into local and community life.

*Party Leader - Japanese Style*

They are vehicles for the regulation of relations between the party leaders and members, the provision of campaign funds for Diet elections, the distribution of Cabinet posts, the making of party policy and the management of party affairs – including the selection of the party leader.

In a leadership contest each faction either enters a candidate of its own, or trades its support to another faction's candidate. No faction constitutes an overall majority of LDP Diet members (see Table 2) so that even when the party leader has been drawn from the largest faction, he has been dependent upon the continued support of more than just his own factional colleagues. Put in place through an alliance of two or more factions, the party leader's authority and security of tenure have been dependent on the continued support of the faction leaders.

TABLE 2  
Composition of LDP Factions, October 1991

	N	%
Takeshita/Kanemaru*	105	26.6
Mitsuzuka	83	21.0
Miyazawa	82	20.8
Watanabe	70	17.7
Komoto	31	7.8
Independents	<u>24</u>	<u>6.1</u>
	<u>395</u>	<u>100.0</u>

\*While Takeshita was the formal head of the faction, Kanemaru was its effective head.

*Party Leader - Japanese Style*

Until 1977 the LDP leader was chosen by a party congress that was composed of the party members in each house of the Diet, plus representatives from the Prefectures (or regions) on which the party organisation is based. This electorate comprised some 550 individuals - about 300 members of the lower house, about 150 members of the upper house and two representatives from each of the 47 Prefectures (reduced to one representative after 1962). Thus the Diet members constituted 80 to 90 per cent of the total. Candidature was confined to members of the Diet. For victory a candidate needed to secure over half the votes, or there was a second ballot confined to the two leading candidates of the first ballot.

There was a contested election under this procedure on just six occasions - to elect Ishibashi in 1956, Ikeda in 1960 and Tanaka in 1972, and to reelect Kishi in 1959, Ikeda in 1962 and Sato in 1966. On four other occasions a contest was avoided when an agreed candidate emerged (Hatoyama 1956, Kishi 1957, Miki 1974 and Fukuda 1976).

In 1976, in face of demands that the leader-selection process be made more open, Prime Minister Miki proposed that a direct ballot of party members should become the basis of the procedure. Under Miki's proposal, any LDP member of the Diet who was supported by ten other Diet members could become a candidate. After the party members had indicated their preferences in a primary ballot, the Diet members would choose between the two candidates with most support. This proposal was part of a modernisation package that was designed to give the party a more progressive image. It met

### *Party Leader - Japanese Style*

considerable resistance, however, from traditionalists within the party and Miki left office before it could be implemented.

Miki's successor, Fukuda, proposed a modified version of the original proposal soon after coming to office. An LDP member of the Diet could be a candidate if he was able to secure the support of fifty Diet members (rather than just the ten that Miki's scheme had required). Initially the party members would cast individual votes for these candidates, but a modified version of the one-member-one-vote principle would apply. Each of the Prefectures was awarded 'electoral points' at the rate of one point for every thousand members. The two leading candidates in a Prefecture would share these points in proportion to the votes they received in that Prefecture. The members of the Diet would then choose between the top two candidates who emerged from this procedure.

Fukuda was able to secure the adoption of this scheme. Ironically, however, when the process was used for the first time in 1978, Fukuda failed to secure reelection for a second term. As a result of the distribution of the members' votes in the 1978 contest, Ohira achieved 748 electoral points, Fukuda 638, Nakasone 93 and Komoto 46. Fukuda then withdrew from the contest before the Diet members were called upon to choose between him and Ohira. Thus, effectively, it was the votes of the party members that on this occasion had rejected the incumbent and selected his successor.

In 1980 democracy was suspended when Suzuki succeeded Ohira without a contest, after the faction leaders had agreed among themselves on Suzuki's selection. Then, in 1981 the rules were

### *Party Leader – Japanese Style*

modified so that a ballot of members would be held only if there were more than three candidates. In 1982, at the end of Suzuki's first term, the faction leaders sought to limit the contest to three candidates. Their intentions were foiled, however, when Fukuda entered the contest as the fourth candidate. In the consequent ballot, Nakasone secured almost 60 per cent of the votes. The other candidates then withdrew so that as in 1978 the Diet members were not called upon to make the final choice between the leading contenders.

This proved to be the high point of participatory democracy in the LDP's leader-selection process. The party members were not again directly involved in the selection until 1991. In 1984 Nakasone was given a second term without recourse to a contest. In 1987 the faction leaders sought to produce an agreed successor, and when they failed to do so Nakasone named Takeshita as the new leader. Similarly in 1989 Takeshita named Uno as his successor in the midst of the 'Recruit scandal' (when prominent members of the party were accused of receiving shares in the Recruit Company in exchange for political favours). When Uno resigned after just three months, Kaifu was elected by the Diet members in a three-member contest.

Thus LDP leaders between 1956 and 1989 were selected (and in a few cases re-selected) through a remarkable range of procedures. At one extreme the choice was made through a direct ballot of party members, while at the other the outgoing leader effectively designated his successor. Between these extremes there were contested elections under the pre-1977 rules (when the electorate consisted of Diet members and representatives of the party outside the Diet), and

### *Party Leader - Japanese Style*

on a number of other occasions an agreed choice emerged, without a formal contest, from discussions among the faction leaders. This variety of procedures reflected attempts to reconcile popular demands for greater participation in the Leader-selection process, with the faction leaders' desire to retain the maximum amount of influence for themselves.

For the 1991 contest the party reverted to a variation of the procedure that had been used prior to 1977. The contest would be decided by 497 'electoral votes'. The 396 LDP members of the two houses of the Diet, voting by individual secret ballot, would constitute four-fifths of this total. The remaining 101 electoral votes would be distributed among the 47 Prefectures, with each Prefecture being allocated one to four votes according to its share of the 1,750,000 party members. Seven of the Prefectures had one vote, 27 had two votes, 12 had three votes and one (Tokyo) had four votes. The individual members would vote in each Prefecture and whichever candidate received most votes in a Prefecture would receive all of that Prefecture's electoral votes.

#### **The 1991 Contest**

Kaifu's initial two-year term as LDP leader was to expire on 30 October 1991 but it was assumed that he would seek (and probably achieve) reelection for a second term. He had become party leader and Prime Minister in 1989 in the wake of the Recruit scandal. Kaifu had not been involved in the scandal and, partly as a result of his un-tainted image, he had considerable support among the party members and voters. Under his leadership the LDP secured a large majority in the

lower-house elections in February 1990. A poll conducted for Kyodo News Service in June 1990 gave the Kaifu Cabinet a record 63 per cent approval rating among the Japanese voters.<sup>9</sup>

Kaifu's popularity among the electorate, however, was not reflected in his standing with the party hierarchy. He was widely regarded by the party notables merely as a 'seat-warmer', leading the party only until more senior figures could regain their credibility after the Recruit scandal. With a relatively youthful (57 when appointed) and 'clean' image, Kaifu was required to restore the party's acceptability without necessarily serving for more than one term.

Kaifu was doubly unusual among LDP leaders in that he came from the smallest (Komoto) faction and had not been the faction leader. His election had been backed by the largest (Takeshita) faction, and he remained dependent on the experience and advice of its leading figures 'behind the throne'. As Prime Minister, he had often seemed indecisive and lacking in authority.

At one time Kaifu's most likely successor had seemed to be Mr. Abe (then leader of the faction that Mitsuzuka was to inherit), but Abe's death in May 1991 led the other faction leaders to re-appraise the situation. It was not clear whether the Takeshita faction would continue to support Kaifu, would transfer its allegiance to a candidate from another faction or would promote a candidate of its own. Ozawa was a potential candidate from the Takeshita faction, but he had been ill and in August he announced that, for health reasons, he could not be a leadership candidate.

*Party Leader - Japanese Style*

On 7th September Miyazawa (leader of the third largest faction) declared that he was likely to be a candidate, and on 14th September Mitsuzuka and Watanabe (respectively leaders of the second and fourth largest factions) indicated that they also would probably enter the contest. Miyazawa was the most experienced of these three likely contenders. He had held Cabinet posts since the early 1960s, including spells as Foreign Minister and Finance Minister. He had been defeated by Takeshita in the 1987 leadership contest but it had been widely assumed then that he was second or third in line for the succession.

Watanabe had also been Foreign Minister and had held a number of other Cabinet posts. Some questioned his suitability because of his notorious lack of tact (as with his observation that China was a place where 'many people still live in caves'). Mitsuzuka led the second largest faction but had less Cabinet experience than Miyazawa or Watanabe. All three of these possible challengers had been tainted by the Recruit scandal.

As was shown in Table 2, the distribution of Diet members between the factions was such that no two factions constituted an overall majority. There were hints, however, of an alliance between the Miyazawa, Mitsuzuka and Watanabe factions to prevent Kaifu securing an overall majority. These three factions together would constitute an overall majority so that a 'second ballot alliance', to support whichever of them was closest to defeating Kaifu, was a possibility.

Kaifu's chances of reelection suffered a major setback on 1st October when proposals for electoral reform, to which he had given

strong personal support, had to be abandoned in face of opposition from LDP Diet members. The legislation sought to reduce the number of Diet members, change from multi-member to single-member constituencies and reform campaign finance laws. It was hoped that these changes would reduce election costs and allow less scope for financial corruption. A consequence of the changes, however, would be that a number of Diet members would certainly lose their seats while others might do so.

Kaifu indicated that he would fight for the reform package and hinted that he would seek to dissolve the Diet and 'take the issue to the people'. In the event, he could not persuade the Cabinet members to sign the necessary dissolution document. His authority was further undermined when he sought to establish a committee on electoral reform under the guidance of the Speaker of the lower house of the Diet. While acknowledging the need for some form of committee, the LDP members of the Diet insisted that it be merely an un-official body, which would have less authority than Kaifu desired.

These developments, which depicted Kaifu as both impetuous and ineffectual, cost him the backing of the Takeshita faction. Kanemaru (the effective leader of the faction) was openly critical of Kaifu's failure to dissolve the Diet or secure the type of electoral reform committee that he wished, and he indicated to Kaifu that he would not receive the faction's backing in the leadership contest. Faced with consequent inevitable defeat, Kaifu indicated on 4th October that he would not seek re-election, while on 5th October Miyazawa, Mitsuzuka and Watanabe confirmed that they would indeed be candidates.

The vital question that remained was which of these three candidates would receive the crucial backing of the Takeshita faction. The decisive point in the contest came on 11th October (two weeks ahead of the ballot) when Kanemaru indicated that the Takeshita faction would give its support to Miyazawa. On the same day the small Komoto faction declared that it would also support Miyazawa. In combination, the Takeshita, Miyazawa and Komoto factions constituted 219 of the 392 LDP members of the Diet, so that Miyazawa's majority was assured as long as faction loyalties could be preserved.

The Takeshita faction's decision to support Miyazawa was made after discussions on 11th October between the three leading figures in the faction (Takeshita, Kanemaru and Ozawa). Previously, the three candidates had been interviewed by members of the faction and Miyazawa had changed his attitude on key issues to make himself more acceptable to them. Although the faction and its leaders remained divided between Miyazawa and Watanabe, the view of Kanemaru (as faction leader) was decisive and binding. As Kanemaru expressed the situation:<sup>10</sup>

"I have been given the authority to make the choice for our faction, so I propose to back Mr. Miyazawa".

With that decision the contest was effectively decided. The faction leaders, and the leader of the largest faction in particular, had committed their troops. Assuming that, as in the past, the Diet members would vote in accordance with their leaders' instructions, the ballot two weeks later would be largely a formality. Speculation commenced about the likely composition of Miyazawa's Cabinet.

The vital question that remained was which of these three candidates would receive the crucial backing of the Takeshita faction. The decisive point in the contest came on 11th October (two weeks ahead of the ballot) when Kanemaru indicated that the Takeshita faction would give its support to Miyazawa. On the same day the small Komoto faction declared that it would also support Miyazawa. In combination, the Takeshita, Miyazawa and Komoto factions constituted 219 of the 392 LDP members of the Diet, so that Miyazawa's majority was assured as long as faction loyalties could be preserved.

The Takeshita faction's decision to support Miyazawa was made after discussions on 11th October between the three leading figures in the faction (Takeshita, Kanemaru and Ozawa). Previously, the three candidates had been interviewed by members of the faction and Miyazawa had changed his attitude on key issues to make himself more acceptable to them. Although the faction and its leaders remained divided between Miyazawa and Watanabe, the view of Kanemaru (as faction leader) was decisive and binding. As Kanemaru expressed the situation:<sup>10</sup>

"I have been given the authority to make the choice for our faction, so I propose to back Mr. Miyazawa".

With that decision the contest was effectively decided. The faction leaders, and the leader of the largest faction in particular, had committed their troops. Assuming that, as in the past, the Diet members would vote in accordance with their leaders' instructions, the ballot two weeks later would be largely a formality. Speculation commenced about the likely composition of Miyazawa's Cabinet.

Some uncertainties remained. It was not clear who would be runner-up, and that issue was of some significance for the future. Watanabe was widely regarded as the likely 'next-but-one' leader, but in order to consolidate his position he sought to maximise his support by attracting dissidents from the other factions. The faction leaders sought to exert pressure on the likely winner in order to secure the maximum number of posts in the new Cabinet. As Watanabe put it:<sup>11</sup>

"If many party members back me in the election, the fact will become a factor that can't be ignored in intra-party politics".

It was also unclear whether on this occasion faction loyalties would be fully preserved. In particular it was not clear how the party members outside the Diet would distribute their votes. The organisation of the faction, and the influence of its leader, extended to the grass roots of the party, and normally the party members could be relied upon to support the stated preferences of their faction leader. In 1991, however, dissatisfaction within the party was such that it seemed possible that on this occasion the members would not necessarily follow the faction-line. With just a fifth of the votes in the contest the party members could not determine the outcome, but they could undermine party cohesion and embarrass the faction leaders by declining to follow their lead.

### **The Outcome**

The timetable for the election was that the party members would vote on Sunday 27th October between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. in 2,956

*Party Leader - Japanese Style*

polling stations throughout the country. Given an average of just 600 potential voters per-polling station, the votes could be counted quite quickly and the voting figures transmitted to party headquarters within a few hours. The Diet members would vote at 5.00 p.m. on the same day, before the outcome of the party members' ballot had been announced. The result would then be declared at about 6.00 p.m. If no candidate had secured an overall majority, a second ballot, confined to the Diet members, would be held immediately. Even in the event of a second ballot, the final result would be known by 7.00 p.m. Thus the whole procedure would take, at most, just ten hours.

The new leader would subsequently be submitted for election as Prime Minister at a special meeting of the Diet on 5th November. The LDP had an overall majority in the lower house of the Diet but not in the upper house. The Japanese Constitution specified, however, that should the upper house fail to endorse the new Prime Minister, the vote in the lower house would prevail.

As can be seen from Table 3, Miyazawa received a very clear overall majority of votes. What is more, those who did not vote for him were divided relatively evenly between the other two candidates, so that Miyazawa received more than twice as many votes as the runner-up. Although Miyazawa's lead was less commanding in the Diet section of the contest than in the Prefecture section, he still had the support of over half of the Diet Members.

*Party Leader - Japanese Style*

TABLE 3  
Result of LDP Leadership Ballot, 27 October 1991

<u>Diet Members</u>		<u>Prefecture Points</u>		<u>Total</u>			
	N		%		N		%
Miyazawa	207	52.4		78	77.2	285	57.5
Watanabe	102	25.8		18	17.8	120	24.2
Mitsuzuka	82	20.8		5	5.0	87	17.5
Invalid votes	4	1.0		-	-	4	0.8
	<u>395</u>	<u>100.0</u>		<u>101</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>496</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Nevertheless, Miyazawa did less well among the Diet members than had been anticipated. Initially it had been thought that he would receive 240 votes - 82 from his own faction, 105 from Takeshita's faction, 31 from Komoto's faction and 22 from independents.<sup>12</sup> In fact, some of the Takeshita and Komoto factions did not vote for him and he received just 207 votes.

It was thought that Watanabe would receive just 70 votes from Diet members but he attracted an additional 32. Widely regarded as a future Prime Minister, Watanabe's long-term prospects undoubtedly attracted a number of votes. This was especially true for members of the Takeshita faction, many of whom (as noted above) had felt that the faction as a whole should have supported Watanabe rather than Miyazawa.

Miyazawa received over three-quarters of the votes allocated to the Prefectures, suggesting that he had more support outside the Diet

*Party Leader - Japanese Style*

than inside. As is shown in Table 4, however, a closer examination of the votes in the Prefectures reveals that the party outside Parliament was not particularly committed to Miyazawa. In the first place, just 55 per cent of the 1,750,000 members participated in the ballot. This compares with 93.2 per cent who voted in the 1982 contest, when it was the party members alone who made the selection. Of those who did vote, just under half voted for Miyazawa and a third for Watanabe. Had the contest been determined solely by the votes of the party members no doubt Miyazawa would still have won, but a further ballot would have been required.

TABLE 4  
1991 LDP Leadership Ballot: Votes of Party Members  
in the Prefectures

	Party Members' Votes	Number of Prefectures		Prefecture Points	
		%	N	%	N
Miyazawa	49.5		37	78.7	78
Watanabe	32.5		7	14.9	18
Mitsuzuka	<u>18.0</u>		<u>3</u>	<u>6.4</u>	<u>5</u>
	<u>100.0</u>		<u>47</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>101</u>

It can be seen from Table 4, however, that the winner-take-all basis of the Prefecture part of the contest meant that Miyazawa's 49.5 per cent of the members' votes became 77.2 per cent of the Prefecture votes. Miyazawa won in 37 of the 47 Prefectures (receiving an overall majority of votes in 28 of them and a simple majority in another 9). Watanabe won in seven Prefectures and Mitsuzuka in just three. A number of the Prefectures that were won by Miyazawa carried just one

*Party Leader - Japanese Style*

or two votes, whereas four of Watanabe's Prefectures carried three votes and the other three carried two votes. This had the effect of boosting slightly Watanabe's share of the Prefecture votes.

TABLE 5  
Distribution of Cabinet Posts Among the LDP  
Factions, November 1991

<u>Faction</u>		October 1991 Membership		Share of Cabinet Posts
	N	%	N	%
Takeshita	105	26.6	7	33.3
Mitsuzuka	83	21.0	4	19.0
Miyazawa	82	20.8	3*	14.3
Watanabe	70	17.7	3x	14.3
Komoto	31	7.8	3	14.3
Independents	24	6.1	1	4.8

\* Includes Miyazawa himself.

x Watanabe was allocated two posts but here is counted only once.

Miyazawa was duly elected to the post of Prime Minister at the special meeting of the Diet on 5th November and his Cabinet appointments were announced at once. In traditional style, the number of posts that each faction was to receive was decided initially, and then the faction leaders determined which of their members would be appointed. As is shown in Table 5, all of the factions (and even the independents) were given representation in the Cabinet, with each faction's share bearing some relationship to its numerical strength.<sup>13</sup> That said, the Takeshita and Komoto factions received

more posts than they were entitled to on a strictly numerical basis, while, as the price that had to be paid for accommodating his allies, Miyazawa's own faction received fewer than its numbers warranted. Watanabe, as runner-up, received two major posts for himself (Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister) and Cabinet posts for his chief colleagues. In addition, each of the four largest factions received one of the main posts in the LDP's own organisation.

The over-representation of the Takeshita faction in the Cabinet reflects the terms on which its leaders had agreed to support Miyazawa's candidature. The faction could thus view its role in the contest with some satisfaction. It had 'backed the winner' and secured an acknowledgement of its future role in policy making and organisational matters. Although some of its members had broken ranks and voted for Watanabe, they had thereby established credit with a likely future Prime Minister. Despite these defections, the faction nevertheless secured from Miyazawa more Cabinet positions than its numbers warranted. In addition, Takeshita and Nakasone were officially named by Miyazawa as 'supreme policy advisers', thereby formally emphasising the central role that their faction would play in the process of government.

## **CONCLUSION**

While the control of party processes by elites is very far from being an exclusively Japanese phenomenon, the history of leader-selection in the LDP provides a classic example of elite management. The LDP faction leaders have influenced the leader-selection process most directly by devising, and regularly revising, the 'rules of the game'.

### *Party Leader - Japanese Style*

Within the rules there are three distinct aspects of a leadership contest over which, potentially, the elites can exert influence - the timing of the contest, the nomination of candidates and the process of choosing between the candidates. As LDP leadership contests are required to take place at fixed two-year intervals (other than when a vacancy arises through an emergency), the elites are not able to control the timing of the process. Nevertheless, they are able to determine whether a leader will serve for the maximum two terms or for just one (as Kaifu found to his cost in 1991).

Further, the faction leaders are able to control to a great extent who will enter the contest: it is difficult for an 'independent', without faction support, to secure the required endorsement of 50 Diet members. As was noted earlier, on five occasions since 1956 an agreed candidate emerged from discussions among the faction leaders, while on two occasions the incumbent effectively designated his successor after an agreed candidate had failed to emerge. In 1991 the faction leaders did not preclude a ballot by producing an agreed candidate. Indeed, the 1991 contest was, in one sense, highly competitive, in that the leaders of three of the five factions were themselves candidates. Nevertheless, the three decisive factors in the contest were the decisions of the leaders of the Takeshita faction to withdraw their support from Kaifu, to refrain from entering a candidate of their own and to commit their troops to Miyazawa rather than to Watanabe.

Underlying all the decisions taken by faction leaders, was the strength of intra-faction cohesion which required Diet members to accept, and act upon, the wishes of their faction leader. The fact that

in 1991 some members of the Takeshita faction broke ranks and voted for Watanabe rather than Miyazawa, does not alter the essential feature of the LDP's leader-selection process - that, for the most part, the faction leaders are able to deliver a bloc of votes.

The contest demonstrated some of the problems involved in incorporating the party members into the selection process in a satisfactory manner. In the first place, the financial cost of intra-party democracy was considerable.<sup>14</sup> The party spent £4.5 million to establish the 3,000 polling stations, distribute election material to the party members and organise various aspects of the contest. In addition, each candidate spent large sums on his campaign. Miyazawa spent £2 million, including £750,000 distributed among his faction members in the Diet to meet the costs of their efforts on his behalf. Mitsuzuka also spent approximately £2 million and Watanabe about £1.5 million. Although the Takeshita faction did not field a candidate, and thus had no campaign expenses as such, it gave £13,000 to each of its Diet members, partly to deflect criticism of its controversial decision to support Miyazawa rather than Watanabe.

One of the arguments advanced in the 1970s by those who sought to involve the party members in the selection process, was that the more open and democratic the process, the less scope there would be for financial interests to influence the outcome. In fact, the extension of the franchise to the party members increased, rather than reduced, the opportunities for financiers to buy influence in the party. Each faction sought to increase its voting strength by recruiting new members, often by paying their membership fees for them. Further, the contests became more expensive to manage as the faction leaders

### *Party Leader - Japanese Style*

were obliged to communicate with their enlarged membership. With these increased costs the factions, and the party as a whole, became even more dependent upon financial backers than previously. The scope for outside influence, and consequent financial scandals, was increased.

The allocation of one-fifth of the electoral votes to the party members is clearly arbitrary : a half, a third, a quarter or a tenth could be justified as readily. The particular proportion of one-fifth represents an attempt to achieve a compromise between the elites' wish to retain control of the process and their recognition of the demands of intra-party democracy.

The key variable, however, is not just the party members' particular share of their votes, but the extent to which the faction members adhere to the faction leaders' instructions. Clearly, if the party members vote faithfully according to the faction leaders' directions, their share of the electoral vote is irrelevant : whatever their share, the party members' votes would merely reflect the distribution of support among the Diet members. Were a sufficient number of the rank and file to reject the lead given by their faction leaders, however, even one-fifth of the votes could be decisive in a close contest. For this to happen, of course, the powerful Japanese traditions of loyalty and deference to the leader would have to be breached. Clearly, institutional reform cannot in itself change behaviour that reflects basic cultural norms.

Despite the oligarchic and deferential traditions of Japanese politics, there were indications during and after the 1991 contest that

the party members were satisfied with neither their one-fifth share of the electoral votes nor with the manner in which the faction leaders had effectively determined the outcome of the contest well before the ballot was held. What is more, as Prime Minister Kaifu had been appreciably more popular among party members than among the leaders of the factions, his overthrow, and the reemergence of those who had been tainted by financial scandal, was resented by the rank and file. The injection of a degree of openness into the procedures of the LDP, and Japanese politics in general, in the 1970s and 1980s meant that in 1991 the rank and file were less deferential towards the party's leading figures than would have been the case 20 years previously.

A survey conducted during the contest by the English-language newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* revealed that 17 of the 47 party leaders in the Prefectures were dissatisfied that Miyazawa's election had been arranged 'behind closed doors'.<sup>15</sup> A further eight indicated that the method of selection should be changed. Thus a majority of the local leaders had reservations about the manner in which the contest was conducted. They protested that while the party claimed to be more open than in the past, the members had been treated with indifference by the faction leaders. They maintained that as a consequence it would be more difficult to recruit party members in the future.

Clearly, if it is indeed possible to achieve a harmonious balance between elite-management and member-participation in a leader-selection process, the Japanese LDP has not managed to do so. While the LDP's process is democratic in form, it is clearly oligarchic in practice. It thereby provides support for Duverger's claim that:<sup>16</sup>

*Party Leader - Japanese Style*

"... the leadership of political parties ... presents dual characteristics: it is democratic in appearance and oligarchic in reality".

The general principle of dividing the votes between the Diet members and the rank and file is sound. The major practical issues remain, however, of precisely in what proportion the votes will be divided and how far the party members will vote as individuals rather than as extensions of the Diet factions. In 1991 the faction leaders again demonstrated that they could manage the leader-selection process but there were sufficient hints of discontent at the grass roots to suggest that this situation might not persist indefinitely.

**FOOTNOTES**

1. I am grateful to David Judge, Tom Mackie and Satomi Niki for their comments on earlier drafts of the paper.
2. See R. M. Punnett, Selecting the Party Leader : Britain in Comparative Perspective, London 1992 (forthcoming).
3. See paper presented at European Consortium for Political Research Workshop on Leadership Selection in Western Political Parties in the 1980s, Paris Joint Sessions, April 1989 organised by Tom Mackie
4. See, for example, L. M. Bartles, Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice, Princeton 1988; J. G. Geer, Nominating Presidents, New York 1989.
5. For discussions of the role of the LDP in Japanese politics see H. Fukui Party in Power Canberra 1970; N. B. Thayer How the Conservatives Rule Japan, Princeton 1969; N. Tamita (et al.) 'The Liberal Democratic Party' in R. J. Hrebenar (ed.) The Japanese Party System, London 1986.
6. For a discussion of the role of the factions see J.A.A. Stockwin, Japan: Divided Politics in a Growth Economy, London 1982, pp. 115-36; B. M. Richardson and S. C. Flanagan, Politics : Japan, Boston, 1984, pp. 100-106.
7. M. Leiserson, 'Factions and Coalitions in One-Party Japan', American Political Science Review 1968, pp. 770-87 (p. 771).
8. For a comment see J.A.A. Stockwin, 'Japan' in V. Bogdanor and D. Butler, Democracy and Elections, London, 1983, pp. 211 and 221.
9. Kyodo News Service, June 1990.
10. Asahi Shimbun, 24 October, 1991.
11. Asahi Shimbun, 17 October, 1991.
12. For a comment on these confidant speculations see Economy, 28 October 1991.
13. See Asahi Shimbun, 6 November 1991.
14. For a discussion of these costs see Asahi Shimbun, 25 October 1991.
15. Asahi Shimbun, 21 October 1991.
16. M. Duverger, Political Parties, London 1964, p. 133.