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I-(4) The Rise and Fall of "Reformist Governments"

Hosokawa and Hata, 1993–1994

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Introduction

On June 18, 1993, in front of Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi, a no-confidence bill was passed by a vote of 255 to 220 in the House of Representatives. It was not the first time an incumbent prime minister received a no-confidence vote in the National Diet. In this case, however, the incumbent party lost its majority in the House of Representatives in the general election of July 18, 1993. In the election's aftermath, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), still the largest party, opted to step down without inquiring too deeply into the possibility of forming a coalition government. The LDP was in fact outmaneuvered by a coalition consisting of the Japan New Party and the New Party Sakigake. In August they formed a coalition government with all the other opposition parties, except for the Japanese Communist Party (JCP). It put an end to thirty-eight uninterrupted years of the LDP as the ruling party.[1]

The new coalition government consisted of the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ), the Democratic Socialist Party, the Kōmeitō (Clean Government Party), the Japan Renewal Party (JRP), the Japan New Party, and the New Party Sakigake. The last three were composed largely of those ex-LDP members who left the party out of their commitment to "reform" the 1955 system (Tanaka 1994).

Both sets of politicians found the reformist movement most convenient to serve their purposes. First, those activists of the Takeshita Noboru faction who had to distance themselves from the allegedly corrupt LDP politics formed the JRP. Second, those LDP politicians whose careers had been circumscribed by the excessively large and bureaucratized party organization formed the Japan New Party and the New Party Sakigake (Inoguchi and Iwai 1987). They were largely backbenchers. They were joined by totally new politicians who wanted to become parliamentary members ex nihilo by jumping on the bandwagon of reformism. Both groups were supported by the electorate, whose distrust in LDP politicians reached new heights (Kabashima 1994). This can be considered reformism from the bottom up in the sense that reformist sentiments of the electorate were siphoned by these two kinds of politicians most successfully (Takabatake 1994).

"Reform," in fact, meant a number of different things. First, it was purported that the Japanese political system is too prone to scandal and should be reformed (Tanaka 1994). This has been especially evident since 1989, when the Recruit scandal was revealed during the legislative efforts to enact a consumption tax bill. Second, the sentiment was strong that the Japanese economic system had gone wrong and that disentangling it and deregulating it may be the wave of the future, especially amidst the longest recession since the collapse of the bubble economy (Nakatani 1993). Third, the view was gaining some support that the Japanese state should be able to act in a much more resolute fashion and that Japan should play a more positive role in the world (Kitaoka 1992). This sentiment has grown especially since the Gulf Crisis of 1990–1991, when Japan's reluctant and limited (mostly financial) participation in the war was severely criticized (Inoguchi 1991b).

Whether the self-claimed reformers are real reformers or not is something that is not a concern here. But the kinds of things they advocate reveal a number of layered dimensions in Japanese politics. Understanding these dimensions also enables

one to understand how the "reformist" government of Hosokawa Morihiro was abandoned by the Social Democratics and Sakigake in spring 1994, leaving the Japan Renewal Party, the Japan New Party, and the Kōmeitō maintaining a minority coalition government with Hata Tsutomu heading it, and further how Hata lost power in June 1994 and was in turn replaced by the coalition government of the Social Democratics, the LDP, and Sakigake.

In less than a year, the prime minister changed three times. The way in which the prime ministers changed has prompted this author to coin the term "karaoke democracy" to characterize Japanese politics of 1993–1994 (Inoguchi 1994e, 1994f).[2] By that I mean the kind of democratic politics with two major components: (1) like karaoke, everyone can take a turn at the microphone and sing songs to the karaoke orchestra, and yet one can treat the whole thing with indifference; and (2) like karaoke, everyone can sing songs reasonably well with the support of karaoke equipment, that is, melodies coming from the CD and words of songs appearing on the TV in front of the singer's eyes. In other words, (1) everyone is almost persuaded that he or she can become a prime minister, and (2) everyone can perform reasonably well, supported by the bureaucrats orchestrating policy legislation and implementation.

In what follows, I will explain how the reformist governments rose and fell under "karaoke democracy." Lastly, I will touch on the prospects for Japanese democratic politics.

Three Dimensions of Reformist Politics

It is my contention that the major symbols of the self-claimed reformers lay bare the key dimensions of Japanese politics in 1993–1994. They are: (1) political ethics, (2) the free market mechanism, and (3) a "normal" state.

Political ethics

It is very important that the reformist movement started as a reaction to the revelations of political scandals enveloping the LDP, especially its largest faction, the Takeshita faction, in 1992.

The Takeshita faction was virtually run by its deputy, Kanemaru Shin, since Takeshita Noboru, its leader, was forced to resign as prime minister because of the passage of the consumption tax law and subsequently quit the LDP because of the Recruit scandal in 1989–1990. It was a time when business boomed, but the cost of living rose as well. The occurrence of politicians taking bribes with such ease and legislating a tax hike infuriated a large number of the electorate.

But Kanemaru was himself hit hard by the revelation of the Sagawa Kyūbin scandal of 1992 and forced to quit politics. Since the bubble economy had deflated and people were badly out of pocket, the scandals were sufficient to make the electorate feel negatively about LDP politics.

The task confronting LDP members in general and Takeshita faction members in particular was how to project a clean image and uphold political ethics when the pervasive distrust in politicians was expressed daily in the mass media. When the de facto leader was arrested, many Takeshita faction members had to distance themselves from the taint of corruption. Hence the formation in spring 1993 of the Japan Renewal Party, whose members were largely from the Takeshita faction and among the most active in running the Takeshita-led or Kanemaru-led LDP politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Given the strong record in Japanese politics that those parties whose politicians were tainted by big scandals tend to be punished in the succeeding election fairly substantially (Reed 1994), it is no wonder the de facto leader is Ozawa Ichirō, a protégé of Kanemaru until his fall in 1992 and of Takeshita until his fall in 1989. Similarly many LDP politicians felt the same way as Japan Renewal Party members. Especially those LDP members whose electoral power bases in their respective districts were not so strong felt acute anxiety as to their reelection prospects. Already in late 1992 the LDP was putting forward the idea of revising the Public Offices Election Law from the system whereby two to five persons are elected in one district with one nontransferable vote (the medium-sized system) to the system whereby one person is elected in one district with one vote (the Anglo-American system).

The reasoning is that with the medium-sized system, the LDP fields plural candidates among

whom competition does not reflect policy differences but the extent to which personal and district needs are satisfied by LDP candidates, thus fostering the climate for higher corruption. Yet many LDP politicians not so confident in his or her reelection possibility felt all the more anxiety about losing their seats given the prospect of competing with fellow LDP candidates in the same district with only one candidate to be elected.

The LDP's proposed reform package in 1992 prompted all the opposition parties to push the counter-scheme of choosing candidates by proportional representation of parties in addition to the Anglo-American system. The opposition parties were all smaller than the incumbent party. Therefore their apprehension is that if only one person is to be elected in one district, the LDP might capture most of the districts. The opposition parties were joined by some LDP politicians who were not so confident about their electoral prospects once the Anglo-American system was adopted.

But once Prime Minister Miyazawa sought to make some concessions toward accommodating those resisting the adoption of the Anglo-American system, opposition within the LDP to the prime minister became intense for being too appeasing toward the opposition parties. Thus the prime minister's position was undermined from both within and without the LDP and thus led to the no-confidence bill in June 1993.

What emerges from this summary is the great significance of electoral uncertainty associated with the impact of the Sagawa Kyūbin scandal and the related electoral system reform prospects on politicians' realignment patterns (Kōno 1994). In other words, reform became everyone's slogan amidst the pervasive distrust of LDP politics. It resembled in a sense the Chinese Red Guard's style of waving the Red Flag in order to oppose the Red Flag. Everyone became a reformist waving the reformist flag, however different their underlying motives and concerns were.

Free market mechanism

The logic of this key symbol is as follows. Corruption takes place in large part because of the close business-government relationship cemented over years of LDP rule. Consequently, deregulating government control and setting the market free from political regulation will alleviate the maladies of corruption. The so-called *zoku* politicians who favor business firms and bureaucratic agencies in return for political donations from the former and legislative support from the latter were notorious for their propensity to take bribes. Public opinion critical of *zoku* politicians welcomed this line of logic as well (Inoguchi and Iwai 1987).

Furthermore, the logic was accepted because the collapse of the bubble economy and the consequent prolonged recession were due in large part to the insufficiently deregulated financial system's overlending. The acceptance of the logic was made easier by the visible loss of competitiveness of the Japanese manufacturing and financial sectors. Many manufacturing firms have to go abroad for direct investment because of the high costs of production at home, while the financial system does not attract foreign capital because of too many regulations. Market liberalization and bureaucratic deregulation became everyone's buzzwords (Nakatani 1993).

In addition to these two political and economic factors, an additional international factor was important (Inoguchi 1993d). Market liberalization had been advocated by the US government for years. But the advent of the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton in the winter of 1993 heralded a much tougher attitude toward the snail's pace of Japan's market liberalization in a number of key sectors. The constituents of the Democratic Party and the end of the Cold War accentuated this tough attitude of the US government on the market liberalization efforts of foreign countries.

The US government's logic is as follows: the huge trade deficit vis-à-vis Japan is caused in a fairly large part by the Japanese government's unjustifiable regulation of its economy. Since the Japanese government has vested interests in keeping a number of key sectors largely regulated, the best policy is to make consumers conscious of the benefits of market liberalization. For that purpose, courting and mobilizing the consumers-cum-voters and even the opposition parties for

the support of market liberalization should be vigorously pursued.

Amongst the opposition parties, the Japan New Party and the Japan Renewal Party portrayed themselves as a party of market liberalization. The US government gave moral support and encouragement to them on a number of public occasions, most notably when President Clinton visited Tokyo in spring 1993. President Clinton met in a most cordial and intimate fashion with some opposition party leaders, like Hosokawa Morihiro of the Japan New Party and Ozawa Ichirō of the Japan Renewal Party, while his meeting with Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi was conducted in a very chilly atmosphere.

Of all the opposition politicians it was Ozawa who expressed the free market philosophy most lucidly (Ozawa 1993).[3] The publication of his book into English and the high-level attention paid to it in Washington, DC, was clear evidence of what he had in mind. Recognizing the need to enhance his and the Japan Renewal Party's position and power, he tried to make the best use of the sympathy of the US government by appealing to its two major concerns vis-à-vis Japan: market liberalization and the political role of Japan in the world. He played up these two themes along with that of political ethics. His own previous engagements with the US government in economic and security matters during Japan-US trade and economic negotiations and in Japan's cooperation and participation in the Gulf Crisis no doubt shaped his own philosophy on Japan's policy on market liberalization and security cooperation. What is important to note is that he believes in what he says and in what that means to the LDP government and the US government from the viewpoint of enhancing his power and position.

The LDP government was cornered in a sense in the game of market liberalization politics by this two-pronged assault: one prong being the US government and the other Ozawa Ichirō.

All these factors lent support to reformist politicians in 1993–1994.

A "normal" state

The impact of the Gulf Crisis of 1990–1991 on Japanese thinking about international peace and security opened up the question of whether Japan should become "normal" or not (Inoguchi 1992, 1993c). "Normal" here is understood to mean that Japan can participate in international security efforts like any sovereign state. This debate entailed the controversy about whether the Constitution should be revised or not. The Constitution explicitly renounces the use of military force for the resolution of international disputes. The controversy has been enlivened by the perceived lack of strong political leadership in Japan's diplomatic conduct, not only in the Gulf Crisis but also in the Japan-US economic talks. The issue of political leadership in crisis management, be it security-related or economic, was linked with the issue of political reform by reformists. What was portrayed by US, international, and Japanese media of Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki's handling of the Gulf Crisis and cooperation with the United States and Prime Minister Miyazawa's handling of economic negotiations with the United States led many voters to believe that political leadership would be enhanced by restructuring the Japanese state through a series of reforms. The vocabulary of democracy like accountability and responsibility was stressed.

Reformists presented a number of schemes towards that goal. They included enhancing the powers of the Prime Minister's Office and reducing the authority of the central government bureaucracy. The Japanese prime minister does not have a large staff of his own, and staff members are mostly recruited from the central government bureaucracy. The result is that the prime minister is more than usually constrained by bureaucrats. The prime minister does not enjoy independent sources of information and independent assistance for policy assessment and judgment. Moreover, the prime minister and elected politicians are perennially handicapped by bureaucrats when the Cabinet Legislative Bureau and the Finance Ministry's Budget Bureau require the bill's consistency with existing laws and the feasibility of budgeting, since only bureaucrats fully have such expertise and information.

To remedy this imbalance of power, the reformists proposed appointing many elected

politicians to the position of vice minister, appointing the prime minister’s staff independent of bureaucratic recruitment, and increasing the staff and the budget of the Prime Minister’s Office (*Asahi Shimbun* 1994).

The reform package dealing with political ethics includes four laws pertaining to political donations, the electoral system, subsidies for political parties, and reshaping of House of Representatives districts according to the changed electoral system. These laws have thus some elements that were argued by reformists to be conducive to greater exercise of political leadership.

The reform package restricted political donations to individual politicians, rather than to political parties, giving party headquarters more leverage over party members, as they could control the allocation of such money. Political parties of center-right persuasions have tended to be grassroots-oriented, with the headquarters’ powers being significantly curtailed by intensely district-oriented politicians.

The changed electoral system is also regarded as conducive to greater exercise of political leadership. House of Representatives elections are to be conducted under the Anglo-American system of choosing one person in one district. This encourages the creation of a two-party system, it is argued, because the system enables party headquarters to have greater leverage over the selection of a candidate in a district.

Subsidies to political parties in proportion to their parliamentary size and their expenditure are also seen as conducive to the exercise of greater authority by party headquarters.

In the area of foreign relations, the issues of UN peacekeeping operations and Japan’s aspiration to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council kept the debate alive throughout 1993–1994. Japan’s participation in the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in running a free election and forming a democratically elected government was seen as a step forward, even if some interpreted it as being accompanied by a timid half step backward (Inoguchi, forthcoming). Prime Minister Miyazawa’s speech in the UN General Assembly in 1992, noting Japan’s aspiration-cum-determination to become the Security Council’s next permanent member, subsequently helped the reformists’ plea for a normal state.

Yet all these do not seem to have created a normal state. Rather, the issue of a normal state seems to have been raised in order to shake the LDP government, whose position had been undermined by its Cold War-era mentality of relying on the United States for security and global market access but resisting its demands to revise its often parochial outlook on world affairs.

Two Steps Forward, One Step Backward

Thus the reformists scored a triumph in 1993 by making the best use of three key terms: political ethics, market liberalization, and a normal state. The next question is: how did they collapse so abruptly in spring 1994 after the passage of political reform legislation?

Basically, the reformists moved two steps forward in a fashion that aroused anxiety in many parliamentarians, and in order to counter the two steps forward the opponents moved one step backward.

It was in late 1993 that the political reform package was legislated. This represents two steps forward. Yet anxiety was also aroused. The Hosokawa government was perennially plagued by revelations of further divisions within the coalition as to what is to be done next and what is to be the general direction of policy.

Then rumors circulated that Prime Minister Hosokawa was tainted by potential scandal. Furthermore, the prime minister clearly said no to the US government in early spring of 1994 during economic negotiations, not bowing to US demands to set numerical targets for market liberalization in a number of sectors. And most importantly, Ozawa Ichirō’s influence was felt by some coalition partners to be unduly large.

In April 1994 the Social Democrats abruptly declared its withdrawal from the coalition government, as did Sakigake. A minority coalition government headed by Hata Tsutomu of the JRP was formed shortly after that. The frustration of the SDPJ and Sakigake was that their voices were not well reflected in the Hosokawa government’s policy. Once the reform package was legislated,

they quit the coalition. The LDP, the largest party, adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Thus a minority coalition government consisting of the Japan Renewal Party, the Kōmeitō, and the Japan New Party was formed. But it was only a matter of time before the Hata government fell. It remained in power for two months.

By this time it was very clear that the SDPJ was worried about the other two key terms: market liberalization and a normal state, which were lucidly promoted by Ozawa Ichirō of the Japan Renewal Party. The SDPJ was frightened by the prospect of remaining in the coalition government, and it thus went out first. Then it discovered that the LDP was not particularly unhappy about the possibility of forming a coalition with the Social Democrats. After all, they are the largest two parties in the Diet and, most importantly, the two parties that worked together for thirty-eight years as the ruling and biggest opposition parties. The thirty-eight years largely coincided with the Cold War era and, more importantly, the era of Japan's "peace and prosperity in one country."[4]

On the two key terms, the positions of the LDP and the SDPJ turned out to be not very different. Both wanted to see market liberalization to move slowly and one step at a time. Also, both wanted to see the Japanese state remain a civilian power, rather than a normal state shouldering too much risk and responsibility.

The discovery of the same policy inclination on these economic and security agendas made the parties natural allies. The government led by an SDPJ prime minister was born out of this understanding in June 1994.

Although somewhat confusing and bewildering, it should not be very difficult to see the contrasts:

Hosokawa said no to the bilateral protectionism suggested by the US government in 1994. After all, the reformist coalition government was for market liberalization. On the other hand, both Miyazawa and SDPJ prime minister Murayama Tomiichi concluded agreements with the US government in 1993 and 1994, respectively. They both agreed with the US government in working out bilateral deals, if not in advancing outright bilateral protectionism.

International security efforts were addressed under Miyazawa and Murayama for Cambodia and Rwanda despite their respective constituencies' much more inward-looking pacifist policy preferences. A few hundred Self-Defense Force officers and soldiers were sent to Cambodia and Rwanda, respectively, against all kinds of warnings against the dispatch. Under Hosokawa and Hata, no new major change was seen in this policy realm in the more outward looking and activist line, perhaps except for the more straightforward apologies expressed for Japan's actions in World War II and for the unconditional extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Reformism from the Inside Out

If the reformist governments of Hosokawa and Hata represent two steps forward and one step backward in terms of political reform legislation, then a less reformist government under Murayama represents reformism from the inside out. By this I mean the outlook that sees policy tasks from the inside, although those tasks are intended to cope with and adapt to the basic external forces confronting Japan.

The following two tasks are regarded as most important: (1) optimal taxation in the light of the growing need to adapt to the steadily aging society and its proportionately increasing demand for medical and welfare expenditures; and (2) optimal institutional division of labor between central and local governments.

Optimal taxation is not easy to determine. The frustration of the electorate over one of the longest recessions since the first oil crisis of 1973–1974, together with Murayama's need to please the public, has led the government to reduce the income tax for the next three years. The Finance Ministry is not necessarily happy about a tax reduction when it is not accompanied by tax hike schemes to meet demands for the steady increase in expenditures. Yet in the longer term one needs to satisfy the electorate's preferences at least at first. Otherwise, whatever tax hike schemes might be conjured up would not be sustainable politically.

Thus even if the direction of taxation looks at first contrary to the prospect for rapidly growing

expenditures, it is because the current coalition looks at policy tasks from the inside out.

The optimal division of labor between central and local governments is not easy to determine as well. Political pressure on administrative reform, that is, bureaucratic deregulation and decentralization combined, has not died out yet. Deregulation and decentralization are designed to go together. Deregulation at the central level is bound to proceed. Market liberalization and globalization have led most countries to adapt to these forces. Japan is not an exception. Along with economic liberalization, a lot of bureaucratic regulation has to go. Hence there is a need to substantially curtail the growth of the central bureaucracy in the longer term.

Yet bureaucratic reduction cannot be implemented unless there are institutions that can accommodate some surplus personnel at the central level—namely, the local bureaucracy, especially at the prefectural level. Hence deregulation has to proceed in tandem with bureaucratic decentralization. In other words, bureaucratic decentralization is necessary from the viewpoint of alleviating the overload of the central bureaucracy as well.

Those policy areas suited to bureaucratic decentralization include education, welfare, construction, and transportation. While the former two areas take up two large expenditure items in the central government, the latter two areas where the bulk of public works projects fall are indispensable to keep local economies alive and well.

At the central government, such policy tasks as (1) diplomacy and defense; (2) money and finance and macroeconomic management; and (3) intelligence and coordination will be accentuated. These are intended to meet the challenges of market liberalization and globalization and enmeshment of national and international security.

Thus even if administrative reform means the reduction of personnel at the central level, it would mean a stronger focus on a number of policy areas with which the central government grapples and the wider-scale shouldering of a number of policy tasks at the local government level. In the longer term this direction represents institutional reform to be conducted without much fanfare.[5]

When reformism from the inside out is shared more or less by the two largest parties, then the reformist governments driven by the key concepts of political ethics, market liberalization, and a normal state have to go. It was reformism from the bottom up in the sense that it was driven by the electorate's pervasive distrust of politicians. Once the reformism from the bottom up achieved its minimum task of appeasing the electorate and achieving the minimum legislative task of political reform, then reformism from the inside out ushered in the dramatic change of coalitions.

When one compares European and Japanese socialist parties, one can see immediately the great emphasis placed on foreign and defense policy in Japan compared to Europe, where emphasis is primarily on social and economic policy. Thus the impact of the end of the Cold War was most tangible among Japanese socialists. They lost their cause célèbre. Prime Minister Murayama represents this most eloquently. He was one of the most left-leaning members of the socialist party, building his career on his strong opposition to the Japan-US Security Treaty. With the end of the Cold War, the Japanese socialists have become not so different from other parties.

Prospect for Japanese Democratic Politics

Frightened by electoral uncertainty amidst the electorate's pervasive distrust of politicians since the Sagawa Kyūbin scandal of 1992, Japanese politicians of all stripes rode the bandwagon of reformism. The three key terms were political ethics, market liberalization, and a normal state.

It was reformism from the bottom up. The self-proclaimed reformists rode the bandwagon of reformist sentiments of the electorate and took new initiatives in taking two steps forward in legislating the political reform package. But once the political reform legislation was completed the electorate's reformist sentiments substantially subsided. The disarray within the coalition manifested itself more strongly. Plagued by the much larger divisions in policy preferences over the key symbols of market liberalization and a normal state among coalition partners than with the LDP, the Social Democratics and Sakigake quit the reformist coalition, leaving the Japan

Renewal Party, the Japan New Party, and the Kōmeitō in the minority government, which fell within two months.

The two largest opposition parties, the LDP and the SDPJ, found it more comfortable to form a coalition together in terms of parliamentary size and policy preferences. In other words, on the basis of the newly found policy quasi-convergence in relation to the much more ideologically purist Japan Renewal Party on such issues as market liberalization and a normal state, they found a formula to assure political stability. This led to the coalition government of the LDP, the SDPJ, and Sakigake in June 1994 with Murayama, a socialist, as prime minister.

The key actor in this was the SDPJ. Stripped of its pet cause of anti-Americanism with the end of the Cold War, the Social Democrats found themselves quite akin to the LDP's policy preferences in terms of market liberalization and a normal state. Both were cautious and moderate on these issues. Murayama announced that the government would pursue "gentle politics." By that he meant the government would proceed to liberalize the economy and to enhance Japan's global role in a prudent and orderly fashion. He does not want to see a shock-therapy-like style of market liberalization. Nor does he like to see the Japanese state become a normal state in the sense of making Japan an active state deploying military force for the settlement of international disputes. On both policy issues, the LDP and the SDPJ are not far apart.

The somewhat opportunistic but bold policy lines of the Japan Renewal Party heralded the advent of Japan's reformist era in 1993–1994. But once it came down to the real tough issues of the speed and nature of market liberalization and the adaptation-cum-transformation of the Japanese state, then the majority favored the coalition of the LDP and SDPJ in terms of policy preference.

Japanese electoral politics seems to unfold in a somewhat dialectic fashion like the reformist politics of two steps forward, one step backward. It looks as if the backward step is permanent at the moment. But the global forces pertaining to security configuration, market forces, and human values will steadily lead the Japanese government to move in the direction that the reformist governments of Hosokawa and Hata proclaimed.

The following three factors will lead Japanese electoral politics to proceed roughly as follows:

First, the SDPJ will shrink in parliamentary size. The steady convergence of policy preferences of the center-right parties makes it hard for the SDPJ to maintain party identity. The Anglo-American system will further knock it down in the forthcoming general election. Second, the LDP will come back even if it may not achieve a parliamentary majority as it has had for most of the past thirty-eight years. Third, a new party that is expected to be founded with the Japan Renewal Party, the Kōmeitō, the New Japan Party and some other small parties as founding partners will establish a substantial parliamentary influence.

But more important beyond the prospects for electoral politics are the three basic factors that continue to shape Japanese democratic politics: first, the increasingly visible convergence of the electorate into center-right ideological preferences; second, the perennial need for politicians to cope with bureaucratic power; and third, the perennial need for center-right parties to have a united candidate at the district level.

First, the electorate's preferences will increasingly converge into center-right positions (Kabashima 1994). All the public opinion poll data attest to this. Second, Japanese politicians have been plagued by the soft power of Japanese bureaucrats since 1890 when the Imperial Diet was convened for the first time (Inoguchi 1994b, 1994d). To cope with the power of bureaucrats in policy formation and implementation, center-right parties will start to think that they have to be a predominant party of a large size and to stay in power for a long time in order to let bureaucrats know that they cannot straitjacket politicians. Third, two of the empirical regularities in Japanese electoral politics are that the smaller the district size, the more united the candidates and that the more local level at which the election is held, the more united the candidates (Reed 1993). Since the district size will become much smaller than the previous district size in terms of the electorate

from the next general election onward, these empirical regularities will hold in stronger form.

Given all these conditions, I suspect that after three to five general elections, that is, in three to ten years, Japan might give birth to a new predominant party with a new set of policy priorities, given the rapidly changing policy environments confronting Japan. The spirit of that possible transformation is to retain the merits of "karaoke democracy" in terms of ensuring wide political participation and political efficacy at the same time but to remold it in a way that enables Japan more adroitly to adapt to changing environments in a more astute fashion than before (Inoguchi 1994g).

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Notes

1. The heyday of LDP rule has been analyzed in terms of policy function and reaction function in Inoguchi 1983. See also Inoguchi 1990. LDP politics toward the end of one-party dominance in 1993 was analyzed in Inoguchi 1993b.
2. "Karaoke democracy" was commented on in the *Economist* (July 2, 1994), 23–24, and the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (July 14, 1994), 11.
3. See also my comparative analysis of Ozawa's and Hashimoto Ryūtarō's books, Inoguchi 1994c.
4. As to Japan's foreign policy, see Inoguchi and Okimoto 1988; Inoguchi 1991a, 1993a. The nature of global change is fully analyzed in Inoguchi 1994a.
5. Prime Minister Murayama has been shifting his focus from bureaucratic deregulation to bureaucratic decentralization.

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