

# THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN JAPAN

KŌJI SUGIMORI

The Japanese elite has been formed for the most part by the graduates of leading universities who enter government administration, big business, the academic world, or the news media. Until recently, those entering politics have come mainly from the government bureaucracy. Politicians issuing from the bureaucracy have been consistently in the mainstream of postwar politics in Japan and have built up the status of the Japanese political power elite. Because of their general ability and the many ties and connections they have with the bureaucracy which are necessary to animate and set in motion the administrative machinery, the bureaucratic politicians have had ideal conditions under which to operate and have seized the political leadership of Japan. However, along with their merits, certain limitations have also become clear. This article studies the inner-mechanism of Japanese political behavior by looking at the various backgrounds of National Diet members and analyzing the patterns that emerge.

## I. CHANGES IN POSTWAR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The defeat at the end of World War II saw a major turnover in Japanese political leadership. Because the Occupation Forces held Japan responsible for the war, many wartime leaders were purged from public office. During the war, with the exception of a small number of left-wing groups and a few politicians favoring close ties with the West, most politicians united to form a political association in support of the war effort.<sup>1</sup> Most of those participating in this organization were purged by the Occupation Forces. Thus most of the prewar and wartime leadership of Japan was barred from public office and disappeared from the political scene until about 1951 at which time many were released from the purge and re-

<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Rule Assistance Association (Taisei yokusankai)—formed in 1940 and patterned after the Nazi “one country, one party” model. All major political parties were dissolved and brought into it.

emerged. The result was that political leaders, for seven years following the defeat, were taken either from the Socialist Party (though its leadership was short-lived) or from the minority that advocated close ties with the West and had been kept from their seats in the Diet during the war. This change was not limited only to the leadership, but there was a general turnover of all politicians. As shown in Table 1, in the first postwar election,<sup>2</sup> 83.4% of the Diet members were elected for the first time. Shifts in political leadership also came about for other reasons. The Socialists, who held only 7.7% of the seats in the Diet in the last prewar election,<sup>3</sup> amid an inter-party struggle, made a 19.8% gain in a single stroke.

**Table 1.** Comparison of the Returns of the Last Prewar Election and the First Postwar Election

Results of the 1937 20th General Election			Results of the 1946 22nd General Election				
Party	Number of Candidates Elected	Percentage of Diet Seats Held	Party	Number of Candidates Elected (A)	Percentage of Diet Seats Held	Number of Candidates Elected for the First Time (B)	B/A (%)
Seiyūkai	175	37.6	Jiyūtō (Liberal Party)	140	30.2	101	72.1
Minseitō	179	38.4	Shimpotō (Progressive Party)	94	20.3	72	77.7
Shakai taishūtō	36	7.7	Shakaitō (Socialist Party)	92	19.8	70	76.0
			Kyōdōtō (Cooperation Party)	14	3.0	12	85.6
			Kyōsantō (Communist Party)	5	1.1	5	100.0
Minor Parties	47	10.1	Minor Parties	38	8.2	37	99.0
Neutral	29	6.2	Independent	81	17.4	75	93.8
Total	466	100.0	Total	464	100.0	372	83.4

Source: Jichi-chō, Senkyo-bu (Election Division, Autonomy Agency), *Shūgin gin sosenkyo kekka shirabe—1946-nen sosenkyo-hen* (Summary of Results of the General Election of the House of Representatives: 1946).

Such a broad turnover among Diet members inevitably served to weaken the functioning of the Diet, since most of those called forth to replace the incumbent politicians after the war lacked adequate previous experience. Moreover, the political climate at that time was determined by the very difficult objectives to be accomplished such as the recovery of the

<sup>2</sup> The twenty-second general election held in April, 1946.

<sup>3</sup> The twentieth general election held in April, 1937.

disrupted economy and the normalization of the complex political situation created by Japan's defeat. Under these circumstances, the top political leaders were able to assume *de facto* dictatorial powers, and the position of the bureaucratic organization was enhanced due to the urgent need for administrative management. More important, however, the unification of Cabinet leadership and high-ranking bureaucrats became a firmly established principle of operation. During the five years from the defeat until about 1950, non-Diet members such as high-ranking bureaucrats and scholars were often taken into the Diet due to the lack of capable representatives.

After this, the advance into the Diet by high-ranking bureaucrats who had established themselves as part of the leadership was assured. In the twenty-fourth general election held in January, 1949, forty-two new Diet members were elected from the bureaucracy. From this group future Prime Ministers and principal Cabinet members were taken and the careers of many influential politicians were launched. Most Diet members issuing from the bureaucracy were absorbed by the Liberal Party (Jiyūtō) which later became the Liberal Democratic Party (Jiyūminshutō).

The following reasons may be given for the merger of bureaucrats and politicians: (1) During the five years following the end of the war, the coalition between Socialists, Democrats, and the People's Cooperation Party (Kokumin kyōdōtō) collapsed, and the victory of the Liberal Party seemed certain. Profiting from this situation, the bureaucrats were able to move in the direction of this new power. (2) The policies of the Occupation, because they developed in line with Cold War strategy, in the end tended to retard rather than advance democratization. Because of Cold War developments, therefore, the Occupation decided to pass the baton from the failing left-wing coalition to the more conservative Liberal Party, and the bureaucracy, by its nature tending to gravitate toward the source of power, chose to align itself with the Liberal Party. In the January, 1949 election, politicians of the Shigeru Yoshida faction favoring close ties with the West, together with bureaucrats outside the Government, united, inside the Diet as well, to form the mainstream of the postwar conservative party. This conservative mainstream has since formed the core of the Japanese political leadership except for a short period when the massive return of prewar-faction politicians and those released from the purge was felt, and the new mainstream found itself temporarily outside the center of politics.

In 1951, the Peace Treaty was signed, and about the time Japan began to recover from the defeat, many purged politicians were released. The prospect of a return of prewar politicians became great. The twenty-fifth

general election held in October, 1952 is worthy of note for this reason. In this election, about 40% of some 329 candidates released from the purge were elected. This represented about 30% of the total seats in the Diet. The proportion of those elected who held high prewar political positions was great, and all of those who had formerly been Cabinet members were re-elected. (See Table 2) In the two conservative parties,<sup>4</sup> then, the reinstated politicians were numerically more important than in the other parties. (See Table 3) The return of this group was, of course, a great shock to Japanese political life. The reinstated politicians, as might be expected, possessed rich political experience gained before and during the war and became elements squarely confronting the new conservative mainstream that had been formed in their absence. The result was that about ten years after the war, the Shigeru Yoshida Cabinet,<sup>5</sup> which had extended its control over most of the government administration, collapsed. Political power was consolidated by the union of his successor, Ichirō Hatoyama, representing the prewar political faction, with non-bureaucratic party members separated from the mainstream who had been dealt a heavy blow by the rise to power of the bureaucrats. From December, 1954 to the end of 1956, the Hatoyama Cabinet took over the administration, normalized Russo-Japanese relations, put into effect a series of management policies that the Yoshida Cabinet had been unable to implement after the war, and then retired. Hatoyama's successor, Nobusuke Kishi,<sup>6</sup> in extending his power as Prime Minister, once again established the leadership of the bureaucratic politicians. This time the conservative party's new mainstream was formed by a fresh alliance of prewar maincurrent bureaucrats such as Kishi<sup>7</sup> and postwar-faction bureaucratic politicians. Kishi, Ikeda, and Satō made use of this alliance, and future Cabinets, whose leadership fell into the hands of the postwar faction, were formed by absorbing both currents. Both Ikeda and Satō, elected in the 1949 election, became representatives of the latter group.

<sup>4</sup> This refers to the Liberal Party, founded in November, 1945, and the Progressive Party (Kaishintō) founded in February, 1952. In November, 1955, the Liberal Party and the Democratic Party (Minshutō) (which absorbed the Progressive Party in 1954) merged to form the Liberal Democratic Party.

<sup>5</sup> Prime Minister from May, 1946 until his retirement from office in December, 1954. Yoshida was out of office only for a brief period between 1947-48 during the short-lived Socialist coalition.

<sup>6</sup> Prime Minister, 1957-1960. When World War II broke out, Kishi was a prewar-faction bureaucrat holding the position of Minister of Commerce and Industry in Tōjō's Cabinet.

<sup>7</sup> In contrast to Kishi, Yoshida entered foreign relations and remained outside the main group of prewar bureaucrats.

**Table 2.** Political Background of Candidates Released from the Purge  
(25th General Election, October, 1952)

Background	Candidates	Elected to Office
Former Cabinet Members	17	17
Bureaucrats	48	29
Military Officers	1	1
Diet Members, Party Officers	45	23
Governors	12	8
Mayors	13	4
Local Representatives	27	18
Others	166	39
Total	329	139

Source: *Asahi shimbun*, Sept. 17, and Oct. 3, 1952.

**Table 3.** Elected Candidates Released from the Purge  
(Classified According to Party)

(25th General Election)

Party	Elected (A)	Released from Purge (B)	B/A (%)
Liberal Party	240	79	33
Progressive Party	85	32	38
Right-Wing Socialist Party	57	12	21
Left-Wing Socialist Party	54	3	5.6
Others	30	13	39
Total	466	139	30

Source: See Table 2.

## II. THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF DIET MEMBERS

In the Liberal Democratic Party as of October, 1967, there were 283 members in the House of Representatives or 58% out of a total of 486. In the House of Councillors, there were 138 members or 59% out of a total of 250. There was a total of 421 Liberal Democratic Diet members in both Houses.

After the war, the Liberal Democratic Party, except for the formation of a coalition with the two leading opposition parties, the People's Cooperation and Socialist parties, took full control of the political situation. An analysis of the Liberal Democratic Party, then, provides an important clue to the nature of the leadership of the Japanese power elite.

Among Japanese politicians, the number of disciplined professionals is small whereas the number of politicians having had some former occupation is overwhelming. Most of these politicians have been able to make

use of their positions and social connections to become Diet members. An analysis of professional backgrounds, therefore, points up one of the distinctive features of Japanese politicians.

Former occupations of Liberal Democratic Diet members may be classified roughly as follows: (1) bureaucrats, (2) local politicians, (3) managers of enterprises and representatives of economic associations, (4) journalists, (5) lawyers, medical practitioners, teachers, professors, and other professions requiring specialized knowledge, and (6) leaders of local political movements. The numerical importance of each category is shown in Table 4. If, in order to see these figures in some relief, a comparison is made with the results of a similar analysis of Socialist professional backgrounds, it becomes clear that the Liberal Democratic Party attaches more import-

**Table 4.** Liberal Democratic Party and Japan Socialist Party Diet Members Classified According to Occupational Background

Occupational Background	Liberal Democratic Party				Japan Socialist Party			
	Lower House	Upper House	Total	Percentage	Lower House	Upper House	Total	Percentage
Bureaucrats	87	54	141	33.3	10	3	13	6.2
Local Politicians	69	19	88	20.9	30	8	38	17.4
Managers of Enterprises and Representatives of Economic Associations	43	35	78	18.5	6	1	7	3.3
Labor Unions	—	—	—	—	55	49	104	49.0
Journalists	32	5	37	8.9	—	—	—	—
Liberal Professions (i. e. lawyers, etc.)	15	12	27	7.2	17	7	24	10.9
Secretaries and Sons of Dietmen	23	2	25	5.6	—	—	—	—
Prewar Proletarian Movement, Party Officers	—	—	—	—	21	5	26	13.2
Other Social, Political Associations	14	11	25	5.6	—	—	—	—
Total	283	138	421	100.0	139	73	212	100.0

Note: The data is as of October 1, 1967.

Sources: Jichi-shō, Senkyo-kyoku (Election Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs), *Shūgiin giin sōsenkyo oyobi saikōsai saibankan kokuminshinsa kekka shirabe* (Summary of Results of the General Election and the National Review of Supreme Court Judges); Jichi-shō, Senkyo-kyoku, *Sangiin giin tsūjōsenkyo kekka shirabe* (Summary of Results of the Ordinary Election for the House of Councillors); Shūgiin jimukyoku (Secretariat, House of Representatives), "Giin keireki hyō" (Tables of Social Backgrounds of Diet Members), in *Shūgiin yōran* (Record of the House of Representatives), March, 1967; Sangiin jimukyoku (Secretariat, House of Councillors), "Giin keireki hyō" (Tables of Social Backgrounds of Diet Members), in *Sangiin yōran* (Record of the House of Councillors), March, 1967; *Nihon shinshi-roku* (Who's Who in Japan), Tokyo, Kōjūn-sha, 1967.

ance than the Socialist Party to occupational groups such as bureaucrats, various economic association representatives, managers of enterprises and journalists. Thus the relative numerical importance of Diet members coming from the bureaucracy is one key necessary to understand the character of the Liberal Democratic Party.

The Japanese power elite has been formed largely by graduates from Tokyo, Kyoto, and a few other national universities, national colleges,<sup>8</sup> and two or three private universities such as Keiō and Waseda, who find positions in government offices, big business, the academic world, or the news media. Since the Meiji era, a protectionist policy for modernization has been pursued to encourage the growth of private industry and further economic development. Thus, compared with the normal *laissez-faire* development of Capitalism in Western countries, Japan's bureaucratic political elite has played a dominant role in the development of the Japanese economy. That many politicians with bureaucratic backgrounds have been absorbed into the Liberal Democratic Party illustrates the mechanism by which a powerful bureaucracy has been welded to the Party and taken over its leadership. In fact, ties with the bureaucracy are the chief support of the Liberal Democratic power elite and enable it to dominate the Japanese political scene. These bureaucratic politicians constitute 33.3% of the total Liberal Democratic representation in the Diet.<sup>9</sup> Most of these politicians are graduates of the leading national universities, as we have seen, and have enjoyed the status of high-ranking bureaucrats. Before entering the Diet, Diet members in this group already formed an elite deriving their power from the administrative functions they performed, possessing adequate political and leadership experience, and having a well-defined status in Japanese politics.

In the Liberal Democratic Party, the bureaucratic politicians' polar opposites are found in the group of local politicians. Having gained many years of experience in regional assemblies, the local politicians built up good records and found their way into the National Diet. The basic differences between this group of *parvenu* Diet members and the bureaucratic politicians are: (1) the poor educational backgrounds of the former,<sup>10</sup> and

<sup>8</sup> *Kokuritsu semmon daigaku*: National universities under the prewar educational system specializing in one field such as the present Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo kōgyō daigaku) and the Tokyo shōka daigaku which specialized in Commerce (the present Hitotsubashi University).

<sup>9</sup> By way of contrast, the number of Socialist Diet members coming from the bureaucracy doesn't exceed 6.2% of the total, and of these, those having had careers similar to LDP bureaucrats are so few that they can be easily disregarded.

<sup>10</sup> Although some local politicians with good academic backgrounds have made their way into the Diet, they are exceptions.

Table 5. Composition of Liberal Democratic Dietmen According to Educational and Occupational Background

Occupational Background	Lower House				Upper House				Total	
	Public Univ.	Private Univ.	Kōsen	Kyūchū Kōshō	Public Univ.	Private Univ.	Kōsen	Kyūchū Kōshō		
Bureaucrats I	55	0	1	0	23	0	0	1	0	24
Bureaucrats II	13	0	2	0	10	0	0	0	0	10
Bureaucrats III	8	2	2	0	18	1	1	0	0	20
Bureaucrats IV	3	1	0	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Local Politicians	11	28	13	4	69	0	9	1	0	19
Managers of Enterprises	16	17	6	3	43	8	12	10	3	35
Journalists	12	19	1	0	32	0	1	2	1	5
Liberal Professions	8	6	1	0	15	4	4	0	0	12
Secretaries and Sons of Dietmen	5	12	3	2	23	2	0	0	0	2
Professional Politicians	4	6	3	0	14	1	5	1	0	11
Total	135	91	32	9	283	66	32	27	6	138

Notes: 1. Those coming from national universities graduate mainly from the University of Tokyo's Faculty of Law and Department of Economics, Kyoto University's Faculty of Law, and Hitotsubashi University (formerly Tokyo shōka daigaku). Next come the University of Tokyo's Engineering Department, Kyoto University's Department of Economics, Tôhoku University, Kyūshū University, and Hokkaidō University.

2. Bureaucrats I: elite of the central administrative section in the Government bureaucracy (above bureau chief); Bureaucrats II: those attached to the central administration sent to local areas who use local support to enter politics (mainly those having been appointed Governor coming from the prewar Ministry of Home Affairs); Bureaucrats III: non-elite bureaucrats of the central administration (below section chief); Bureaucrats IV: regional bureaucrats.

3. In the prewar educational system, Kōsen (Kōtō semmon gakkō) were vocational and technical high schools, Kyūchū (Kyūsei chūgaku) were boys academic middle schools, and Kōshō (Kōtō shōgakkō) provided education 2 years beyond the primary level.

Source: See Table 4.



Table 6. Educational Background of Upper and Lower House Diet Members According to Party

Party	Lower House			Upper House		
	Dietmen with Good Educational Backgrounds (A) (%)	Percentage of (A) who are University Graduates (B)	Percentage of (B) who are National University Graduates (C)	Dietmen with Good Educational Backgrounds (A) (%)	Percentage of (A) who are University Graduates (B)	Percentage of (B) who are National University Graduates (C)
Liberal Democratic Party	88.5	77.5	45.7	88.9	64.3	48.1
Japan Socialist Party	61.7	40.7	21.2	58.9	24.7	9.6
Democratic Socialist Party	77.4	64.5	41.9	14.3	14.3	14.3
Komeito	36.0	32.0	8.0	65.0	40.0	15.0
Japan Communist Party	60.0	60.0	60.0	75.0	—	—
Two Chambers Club	—	—	—	25.0	—	—

Note: Included in the group of Dietmen with good academic backgrounds are university graduates, graduates of the Semmon gakkō (specialized schools resembling American junior colleges), the former prewar high schools, and the normal schools (Shihan gakkō) for training teachers. The latter three were absorbed into the universities under the postwar educational system.

Source: See Table 4.

(2) the low social prestige of their previous occupations.

These Diet members, lacking both the administrative and leadership experience of the bureaucrats and their specialized knowledge, have instead the experience and political influence gained from years of participating in local activities. It is by combining these two important characteristics, leadership ability and local influence, that the Liberal Democratic Party has been able to maintain its position as the Government Party for so long. But I shall return to these points later.

Another special feature of Liberal Democratic Diet members is the large percentage having backgrounds as managers of enterprises and representatives of economic associations. It is characteristic of these Diet members that very few come from the parent organizations of Japan's large enterprises. Most Diet members issuing from this group were managers of small scale, local enterprises engaged not in manufacturing industries or finance agencies, but rather in the construction, transportation, and tourist industries. Others worked for local newspapers. Again, members of this group, rather than working for the representative organizations of big business, have tended instead to represent regional agricultural and fishery

cooperatives or the associations of small scale enterprises.<sup>11</sup> However, while the managers of large-scale enterprises behave in a way similar to bureaucratic politicians, the behavior patterns of representatives of small enterprises and agricultural cooperatives resemble better those of local politicians. Regarding educational standards, the good academic backgrounds of the former group and the poor academic backgrounds of the latter divide representatives of economic associations into two distinct groups. (See Table 7)

**Table 7.** Composition of Managers of Enterprises and Representatives of Economic Associations in the Liberal Democratic Party

Background			(Number)
	Lower House	Upper House	Total
Managers of Big Business	7	9	16
Managers of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises	28	12	40
Officials of Economic Associations (of these, Agricultural Cooperative Associations)	6	11	17
Those with Experience in Business	(4)	(11)	(15)
Total	2	3	5
Total	43	35	78

Note: "Big business" refers not only to Japan's large monopolistic enterprises but also to the Second Section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange. In the case of the Lower House, almost all are managers of construction companies. These companies have grown and expanded due to Japan's current, unprecedented construction boom.

Source: See Table 4.

Another feature of the Liberal Democratic Party is the large number of Diet members coming from the news media. As a general pattern, this group has used influential political connections, made when they were newspaper or radio reporters, to enter politics. The educational background of this group is similar to that of the managers of enterprises and representatives of economic associations. Status-wise, they are situated midway between the bureaucrats and local politicians. Their political role is, as we shall see, also an intermediate one.

### III. LEADERSHIP IN THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Politicians from the bureaucracy have a firm grip on the Liberal Democratic leadership. Bureaucratic politicians built up the status of the power elite while they were in the Government administration. As already

<sup>11</sup> The interests of big business are represented directly by economic associations such as the Japan Federation of Employers Association (Nikkeiren) or the Japan Committee for Economic Development (Keizaidōyūkai).

seen, the Japanese "elite course" consists of graduating from a prestige university and beginning a career in the bureaucracy, big business, the academic world, or the news media. Of these, those following the "politician's course" have, up until now, come mainly from the bureaucracy with the exception of a few from the news media; however, the case of individuals with non-elite backgrounds in the news media group is not rare, the reason being that outstanding journalists often devote themselves to their professions. In this way, the bureaucrats have maintained their exclusive status as a political elite.

The bureaucratic politicians have been able to consolidate power for three reasons: (1) Political management in modern society has become an increasingly complicated matter, and the technical knowledge of the bureaucrat (upon which his general ability to make sound judgments is based) has become indispensable. (2) Because the importance and size of the administrative organ has grown in the Government, Diet members having individual ties with the administrative mechanism and able to set it in motion have been able to secure a more advantageous position than those who have no such connections or ability. (3) In order to repair the extensive damage caused by the war and put the Japanese economy, which seemed backward when compared with the developed economies of Western nations, on the road to recovery, the economic world received direct

**Table 8.** Liberal Democratic Diet Members with Ministerial Experience in the House of Representatives (Classified According to Occupational Background)

Occupational Background	Number of Dietmen (A)	Those with Ministerial Experience (B)	B/A (%) (C)	Those Serving as Minister More Than Three Times (C)	C/A (%) (D)	Those Elected to Office More Than Seven Times (D)	Number in (D) Who Have Ministerial Experience (E)	E/D (%) (E)
Bureaucrats	87	39	44.8	21	24.1	33	33	100.0
Local Politicians	69	10	14.5	4	5.8	25	10	40.0
Managers of Enterprises	43	17	39.6	9	20.9	25	15	60.0
Journalists	32	14	43.7	6	19.0	16	14	89.0
Liberal Professions (Lawyers, Medical Practitioners etc.)	15	6	40.0	3	20.0	11	6	54.5
Secretaries and Sons of Dietmen	23	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Other Political Associations	14	5	35.7	1	8.0	12	5	41.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>67.0</b>

Source: See Table 4.

assistance from the Government in the form of long-term capital loans, trade protection through exchange controls, market guarantees, taxation safeguards, and land sites and related construction production facilities (except factories) under the rubric of regional development programs. Thus a union between high-ranking bureaucrats and the economic world took place enabling the bureaucrats to receive various kinds of aid from economic interests on the grounds that a policy of cooperation was vital to

**Table 9.** Liberal Democratic Diet Members in the House of Representatives Forming the Power Elite (Classified According to Occupational Background)

Occupational Background	Number of Dietmen	Percentage
Bureaucrats	21	47.7
Local Politicians	3	6.8
Managers of Enterprises	9	20.4
Journalists	5	11.5
Liberal Professions	3	6.8
Others	3	6.8
Total	44	100.0

Source: See Table 4.

**Table 10.** Percentage of Bureaucratic Politicians Among Diet Members with Ministerial Experience (Classified by Ministry)

Ministry	Percentage
Foreign Affairs	67
Finance	50
Justice	46
Education	56
Health and Welfare	58
Agriculture and Forestry	50
International Trade and Industry	46
Transport	44
Posts and Telecommunications	50
Labor	13
Construction	10
Home Affairs	50
Economic Planning Agency	17

Note: State Ministers such as the Director-General of the Hokkaidō Development Agency, the Director-General of the Science and Technology Agency, and other Director-Generals are almost all politicians with non-bureaucratic backgrounds.

Source: See Table 4.

the national interest.<sup>12</sup>

As we have already seen, politicians from the bureaucracy control the Liberal Democratic leadership. A close look at some relevant data may indicate why this is so. (See Tables 8, 9, 10)

First, if we analyze Diet members with ministerial experience in the House of Representatives, we find that 44.8% of those with bureaucratic backgrounds, but only 14.5% of the local politicians, have had such experience. Among the bureaucrats, the percentage of those having served as Minister more than three times is 24.1%, but only 5.8% for local politicians. Moreover, of those elected to office more than seven times, all bureaucrats, but only 40% of the local politicians, have ever held a Cabinet position. If we look at a breakdown of those with ministerial experience, in contrast to an overwhelming number of bureaucrats in the Government who occupy inside posts holding a casting vote such as the Finance, International Trade and Industry, and Foreign Affairs ministries, the posts occupied by the non-bureaucratic Diet members are relatively minor ones such as Labor, Construction, Economic Planning, or various outside bureaus in the administration such as the Hokkaidō Development Agency or the Science and Technology Agency.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to bureaucratic politicians who are elected to office an average of seven times and therefore belong to the power elite,<sup>14</sup> Diet

<sup>12</sup> The Japanese bureaucratic establishment has sent many capable men into the economic world as well as into politics. After the war, the Japanese economy experienced rapid growth, and men of ability were needed in business to meet the demands of industrial expansion. For this reason, bureaucrats with technical knowledge having completed the "elite course" came to form a kind of talent reservoir. For example, from 1965 to 1967, 336 high-ranking bureaucrats transferred to private enterprises and were able to secure high positions. Again in 1967, 188 high-ranking bureaucrats transferred to financial agencies and other enterprises (specific corporations) in which the Government had invested money. By way of contrast, the status of eight bureaucrats taken into the Diet in 1967 was lower than that of the group transferring to private industry from 1965-67.

Recently, the number of high-ranking bureaucrats entering the economic world rather than politics has been great since it is in private industry that they have been able to make best use of their talents. Furthermore, in the Diet, a specific *status quo* prevails (i. e. the seniority system), and being elected once or twice has not been sufficient to establish oneself as a member of the power elite.

<sup>13</sup> See, Shigeo Misawa, "Seisaku kettei katei no gaikan" (Outline of the Policy-Decision Making Process Since 1955), in *Nempō Seijigaku 1967—Gendai Nihon no seitō to kanryō* (The Annuals of The Japanese Political Science Association, 1967, The Parties and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Japan—Since the Conservative Fusion in 1955), Tokyo, Iwanami-shoten, 1967, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> The criteria for the "power elite" are given in, Kōji Sugimori, "Nihon no seijika bunseki" (An Analysis of Japanese Politicians), *Jiyū*, May, 1968, p. 43.

members coming from economic associations and the news media must be elected an average of nine times and local politicians more than ten times to qualify as members of this select group. These data indicate how Diet members with bureaucratic backgrounds have been able to hold superior positions in the Liberal Democratic Party and maintain a firm grip on political leadership.<sup>15</sup>

#### IV. TOP LEADERS AND FACTIONS IN THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Top political leadership in Japan has been in the hands of bureaucratic politicians except for two short periods when non-bureaucrats took charge of the Government.<sup>16</sup> Since the Kishi Cabinet in 1956, however, the position of the bureaucratic leadership has been securely established.

There are currently twelve factions in the Liberal Democratic Party competing fiercely for control of the leadership. The establishment of the bureaucratic leadership is reflected in the nature of the competition between factions. Ten years ago factional disputes revolved around leadership initiative between the bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic factions, but recently the dispute has shifted to inside the bureaucratic faction itself.

At present,<sup>17</sup> in the House of Representatives, Prime Minister Eisaku Satō's faction has the most influence, constitutes the main current of the Liberal Democratic Party, and forms the Cabinet together with the third largest Miki faction (Minister of Foreign Affairs), the fourth largest Fukuda faction (Secretary General of the LDP), the sixth largest Kawashima faction (Vice-President of the LDP), and a few other groups. The Maeo faction is the center of the anti-main current group and has the second most influence. Satō and Maeo have had similar careers. Both graduated

---

Criteria: (1) Diet member over 50 years of age, served as Minister or one of 3 top-ranking officials in the party, or been President of either House, more than 4 times.

(2) Diet member in his 40's, served as Minister or one of 3 top-ranking officials in the party more than twice.

<sup>15</sup> Of the 44 Liberal Democratic Diet members forming the power elite (based on the number of times elected, main party officials, and the amount of prior ministerial experience), 21 or 47.7% were former bureaucrats.

<sup>16</sup> The Katayama Cabinet—a coalition between the Socialists, Democrats and the People's Cooperation Party, May, 1947-February, 1948.

The Hatoyama Cabinet—December, 1954-December, 1956. A similar case, the Ishibashi Cabinet, is not mentioned here because it lasted only two months after being approved and was never able to assume full control of the Government.

<sup>17</sup> As of October 1st, 1967.

from the University of Tokyo and became bureaucrats before entering politics. After winning the initiative from the non-bureaucratic faction, they swallowed up these politicians and set about resolving the leadership

**Table 11.** Factional Composition of Liberal Democratic Diet Members in the House of Representatives (Classified by Social Background)

Background	Faction Leader (*—coming from the bureaucracy)										
	Satō*	Maeo*	Miki	Fuku- da*	Naka- sone	Kawa- shima	Fuji- yama	Funa- da*	Mori	Ishii	Others
Bureaucrats	23	23	7	5	3	5	3	4	2	4	7
Local Politicians	13	8	11	6	8	5	5	3	6	1	3
Managers of Enterprises	8	6	6	3	2	0	3	1	2	4	8
Journalists	6	2	5	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	2
Liberal Professions	2	1	1	1	2	1	4	0	1	1	1
Others	4	2	5	5	5	3	1	4	2	1	5
Total	56	42	35	23	23	17	17	15	14	14	26

Note: Political Backgrounds of Faction Leaders:

Satō—Present Prime Minister, former Administrative Vice-Minister of the Transport Ministry.

Maeo—Former Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party, former Minister of International Trade and Industry, former chief of the Tax Bureau, Ministry of Finance.

Miki—Present Minister of Foreign Affairs, former President of the People's Cooperation Party (Kokumin kyōdōtō), elected to office twelve times, former Minister of International Trade and Industry, etc.

Fukuda—Present Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party, former Minister of Finance, former chief of the Tax Bureau.

Nakasone—Present Minister of Transport, elected to office nine times, former Director-General of the Science and Technology Agency, etc.

Kawashima—Present Vice-President of the Liberal Democratic Party, former Director-General of the Autonomy Agency, etc., elected to office thirteen times, former journalist.

Fujiyama—Former President of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, former company president.

Funada—Former Speaker of the House of Representatives, former Minister of State, etc., former Director-General of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau.

Mori—Former Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office, former company president, (died in June, 1968).

Ishii—Present Speaker of the House of Representatives, former Minister of Justice, etc., former representative of a newspaper company.

Sources: 1. The data concerning factions come from *Kokkai binran* (National Diet Survey), Tokyo, Nihon seikei shimbun shuppambu, 1967.

2. The data concerning social backgrounds come from the same sources cited in Table 4.

struggle within their own faction.

If one looks at the composition of factions classified by the social backgrounds of Liberal Democratic Diet members, it will be seen that the number of politicians issuing from the bureaucracy is overwhelming in both main current and anti-main current factions. On the other hand, groups that have risen to the leadership of non-bureaucratic factions contain a very small percentage of bureaucrats.

Fifty-four percent of all Diet members with bureaucratic experience are concentrated in the Satō and Maeo factions. At present, with Satō, Miki, Fukuda, Kawashima, and Nakasone in an intermediate position forming the main current, Japan's political affairs are managed under the leadership of the bureaucratic faction in cooperation with the non-bureaucratic faction. For Maeo to take the leadership from the Satō faction, the co-operation of the influential Miki, Nakasone, and Kawashima factions plus a new set of circumstances would be necessary. Thus, as far as Cabinet members and party officials from various factions are concerned, it is impossible to assure the leadership without compromising financially and policy-wise with non-bureaucrats.

Another characteristic of Diet members classified by factions is that while those from the bureaucracy are concentrated in the two large Satō and Maeo factions, Diet members with other professional backgrounds are scattered among several factions. Of course, the percentage of non-bureaucrats in some factions is high compared with others, but in absolute terms they are few and are scattered throughout the different factions.

In this respect, when we compare the present bureaucrats and non-bureaucrat party members with the systematization and concentration of Diet members in their respective factions that existed previously, it can be seen that a change has indeed taken place. In other words, when the faction of non-bureaucrat party members realized they could not establish their own leadership, they began to move in the direction of the bureaucratic faction which had gained the initiative. However, this new leadership, which was then competing with another bureaucratic faction, energetically absorbed the non-bureaucrats into its own organization to insure its position and consolidate power.

#### V. A PATTERN ANALYSIS OF DIET MEMBERS

So far, I have outlined the basic characteristics of the Liberal Democratic Party's national representatives and leadership elite. To continue with the above summary, I would like to describe these characteristics analytically.



Japanese Diet members may be classified according to the following basic patterns. Each pattern contains two or three sub-types.

- |                                       |                                    |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) Administrative Pattern            | (a) Generalists                    |
|                                       | (b) Specialists                    |
| (2) "Ability" or Intermediate Pattern | (a) Policy Makers                  |
|                                       | (b) Managers                       |
|                                       | (c) Ideologues                     |
| (3) Popular Pattern                   | (a) Pressure Group Representatives |
|                                       | (b) Local Politicians              |
|                                       | (c) Wealthy Politicians            |

This pattern analysis is applicable not only to the Liberal Democratic Party, but also to the Japan Socialist Party, the Democratic Socialist Party, the Clean Government Party (Komeito), the Japan Communist Party (Kyōsantō) and other opposition parties. The special feature of the Liberal Democratic Party is that while other parties conform to some of the above patterns, LDP members conform to all of them.

#### *The Administrative Pattern*

At present, the administrative type politician controls the leadership inside the LDP. The Liberal Democratic Party has extended its control over the Government, and, since general administrative ability is essential to handle the everyday affairs of the Government, it is this ability that has become the standard for evaluating LDP politicians.

The skills required for modern political management are measured by (1) the ability to manage the complex and overdeveloped administrative machinery, and (2) keen political judgment and general leadership ability. This ability, as already seen, can be gained from knowledge and previous bureaucratic experience or through the cultivation of connections and ties which can be used to set in motion and animate the administrative machinery. In this sense, politicians from the bureaucracy have an advantage over politicians from other occupational backgrounds. Since the problems administrators must deal with are becoming more and more complex, Diet members with administrative ability have specialized and split into two groups or sub-types: generalists and specialists.

The generalist type, in Japan, is made up of bureaucrats who direct the economic organs of the Government such as the Finance and the International Trade and Industry ministries. Generalists influence Japan's political orientation by maintaining close contacts with the councils and policy committees (which are Government advisory organs) and with policy committees of the Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren) com-

prised of top leaders in the economic world.<sup>18</sup>

Specialists come mainly from non-economic Government bodies and possess a thorough, specialized knowledge of a particular administrative field. They maintain close contacts with the various administrative organs, and specific industries in the economic world. These various ties and connections reflect the role they play in politics. Among the core members of the Policy Board (Seimuchōsakai), the specialist politician has a strong voice and exercises great influence over the management of concrete political affairs.

In the House of Representatives, Diet members must take into consideration the interests not only of specific industries but also of the regions in which they are located because of ties and obligations to their local constituencies. Members of the Lower House are not evaluated as politicians solely on the basis of their over-all sound judgment, but also according to their local popularity which depends on how well they look after local interests. This results in a tendency to attach more importance to local interests in order to insure successful election results. On the other hand, many members of the House of Councillors (elected from the national constituency) become spokesmen for particular political and economic interests. Specialist politicians therefore come mainly from the Upper House.

The administrative pattern is usually found mainly in the Liberal Democratic Party. This kind of politician is, however, occasionally found also in the Japan Socialist Party. Since the Socialist Party has been the main opposition party for many years, ties with the administrative organization are weak, and because the opportunities to make use of this administrative ability have not been frequent, such ability has not been greatly

<sup>18</sup> The Government advisory organs submit important findings in response to Government inquiries, which have a strong influence on policy decisions. Most of the heads of committees and councils are leaders in the economic world or are influential scholars. Most committee members also come from the economic world. For example: Economic Council (Chairman: Kazutaka Kikawada, President of the Tokyo Electric Power Co. Inc.), Financial System Council (Chairman: Ataru Kobayashi, former Governor of the Japan Development Bank, former Chairman of the Arabian Oil Co., Ltd.), Foreign Investment Council (Chairman: Ataru Koboyashi), Industrial Structure Council (Chairman: Hiromi Arisawa, Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo), Rice Price Council (Chairman: Hiromi Arisawa), Administrative Inspection Commission (Chairman: Director-General of the Administrative Management Agency); there are also various ad hoc committees such as the Research Committee on Prices, Wages, Income, Productivity, etc.

The Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren) has 26 standing committees (such as the Committee on General Policy, the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, etc.) which have been established with various leaders from the economic world participate and help make policy decisions.

valued inside the Party. The absence of this type of politician has kept the Japan Socialist Party from securing the necessary majority in the Diet needed to come into power. Furthermore, because this ability has not been valued properly, it has been difficult to attract able members of the elite into the Party. Unable to bring in administrative type politicians, the Socialist Party is trapped in a vicious circle.

In the Liberal Democratic Party, Diet members in this category have been limited to ex-bureaucrats. As previously seen, members of the elite transferring into politics have come mainly from the bureaucracy since politicians from financial circles and the academic world are relatively few.

#### *The "Ability" or Intermediate Pattern*

Politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party falling in this category assist and advise administrative type politicians (1) with respect to policy, (2) with respect to party management, and (3) ideologically. In the Japan Socialist Party, however, these politicians are in control of the leadership.

This political pattern differs from the administrative pattern which is based on a high position in the administrative machinery. Politicians in the intermediate category have left careers as journalists, professors, lawyers, and doctors to enter politics. Some have also had experience in business. For those having no direct political base from which to draw support, special abilities are required. In the intermediate category, three sub-types are found: policy makers, managers, and ideologues.

Policy makers compensate for the usual faults of administrative type politicians such as sectarianism, aloofness from the people, and lack of perspective by bringing into politics foresight, a concern for the people, and policies flexible enough to meet the changing social situation.

Managers fill the gap between the administrative politicians with their political sectarianism and the popular politicians who will be examined later. They also regulate the party machinery and see that it operates smoothly. Previously, this type of politician came to the fore as leaders of the partisan faction opposing the bureaucratic politicians, but recently—inside the Liberal Democratic Party, administrative leadership ability is the criterion for evaluating politicians—rather than opposing them, they have come to play a supporting role.

In the Socialist Party, as we have seen, the managers still control the leadership due to the absence of administrative type politicians. Formerly, the managers joined ranks with the ideologues (when the Socialist Party's standard of action was still based on Marxist class theory), and took over the party leadership, but recently they have joined with the policy makers

and are in the process of evolving a new leadership.

In the past, when the Socialist and Communist parties put great emphasis on the ideological side of their programs, the ideologues came to play a distinctive political role in the LDP by emphasizing class ideology which the bureaucrats lacked, by stressing its educational and cultural aspects, and by advocating a policy of public order. Ideology retreated from the foreground of politics as society developed and stabilized itself and was gradually pushed into the background as the struggle over administrative policy between the Government and opposition parties became normalized. However, recently, advocates of a "neo-capitalist" ideology have appeared who, while assisting the administrative type politicians and embracing traditional values, demand a new political role for themselves. In the Japan Socialist Party, since Party ideology has remained strong, this political role has greater importance than in the Liberal Democratic Party.

#### *The Popular Pattern*

Politicians conforming to this pattern are numerically important in both the Liberal Democratic and Socialist parties. However, in the LDP, unlike the Socialist Party, local politicians outnumber pressure group representatives. Popular politicians in both Government and opposition parties open their parties to the people, and their political action reflects the interests of those who support them. The base of support for local politicians and representatives of pressure groups overlaps, but there are, of course, some differences.<sup>19</sup>

In the Liberal Democratic Party, the local politicians are numerically the most important. They have joined with the administrative type politicians and under their leadership are able to pursue their own local interests. Through these local interests they are able to build up the base of Liberal Democratic power as well as their own. In other words, administrative and popular politicians (especially the local type) constitute the two bulwarks of Liberal Democratic leadership. Both types, besides agreeing to requests for cooperation on financial matters and policy compromises, share political positions and power. Administrative politicians controlling the leadership not only satisfy local demands through popular politicians, but on the basis of tenure, appoint them to high political posts such as Minister or Parliamentary Vice-Minister. Liberal Democratic politicians, supported by pressure groups, mainly represent Agricultural and Fishery cooperatives or associations of small-scale industries. Since these regional

<sup>19</sup> Most members of the House of Councillors (who are elected from the national constituency) are representatives of pressure groups.

economic associations do have deep roots in particular areas, local interests are therefore represented to some extent.

In the Socialist Party, the situation is different; representatives of pressure groups are more centralized. The Liberal Democratic Party promotes politically powerful local interests throughout Japan and thereby stabilizes its political base, but the Socialist Party, being out of power for the present, can only promote political movements representing particular class interests in local areas such as labor unions and a few social groups (mainly low income earners). However, in the Liberal Democratic Party there is a tendency for pressure groups and regional organizations to form one group. This differs from JSP support groups which center around pressure groups, supplemented by a few local organizations. For most Liberal Democratic politicians, place of birth and electoral district are the same, but this is generally not true of the Socialists. This is one more criterion for indicating differences between the Liberal Democratic and Japan Socialist parties. One reason for the Socialist Party's distance from political power, then, is the lack of generalized, all-inclusive functions such

**Table 12.** Political Roles and Numerical Importance of the Liberal Democratic and the Japan Socialist Parties  
(Classified according to pattern-type)  
(For the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors)

Pattern-type		Liberal Democratic Party	Japan Socialist Party
Administrative Pattern	Generalists	5% (Control of leadership)	1% (Very few)
	Specialists	10% (Supplementary role in administration)	2% (Very few)
Intermediate Pattern	Policy Makers	5% (Supplementary role in political decision making)	5% (Possibility of controlling leadership in future) 5% (Control of leadership through mutual alliances) 5%
	Managers	5% (Supplementary role in party management)	
	Ideologues	5% (Supplementary role in ideological matters)	
Popular Pattern	Pressure Group Representatives	20% (Representing interests of pressure groups and expanding the base of political support)	45% (Mainly depending on labor unions and expanding base of support)
	Local Politicians	40% (Representing local interests and expanding base of support)	35% (Expanding base of support by representing local interests and low income groups)
	Wealthy Politicians	10% (Using financial power and political influence to extend base of support)	2% (Very few)
Total		100%	100%

Source: See Table 4.

as seen among LDP Diet members.

At the end of this section I have analyzed the political patterns of Diet members in both Liberal Democratic and Socialist parties and their political roles. (Table 12) As may be seen, compared to the Liberal Democratic Party, the Japan Socialist Party is clearly lacking in variety. Differences in the two parties lie in: (1) different patterns of leadership, especially the lack of administrative types in the JSP; (2) different types of popular politicians—while the Liberal Democratic Party relies on local politicians, the Socialist Party depends on politicians supported by pressure groups; (3) a different distribution of types—while the Liberal Democratic Party has a well-balanced distribution of the various political types, the Socialist Party is relatively unbalanced in this respect. As for the other opposition parties, there are few administrative type politicians in the Democratic Socialist Party, and most Komeito politicians fit into the popular pattern or belong with the ideological politicians in the intermediate category. The present political situation in Japan is best illustrated by the fact that even a coalition of all opposition parties would not be sufficient to seriously threaten the position of the Liberal Democratic leadership.

#### CONCLUSION

The bureaucratic politicians have been able to seize political leadership because, as we have seen, the bureaucratic cadres along with big business, the academic world, and the mass media have constituted an important reservoir of talent from which the Japanese power elite has been able to draw. Thus politicians coming from the elite have, for the most part, been bureaucrats. In other words, the political elite which is able to deal with the complexities of modern politics has come only from the bureaucracy. As well as a ready source of talent, there was also a sound basis in the postwar political machinery for the existence of a bureaucratic political elite.

The overprotective policy that the Government has pursued on behalf of the Japanese economy since the end of the war has contributed greatly to the bureaucratic control of political leadership. Since the adoption of the priority production system<sup>20</sup> between 1946 and 1947, the Government has assisted economic interests in many respects by providing tax deductions, capital loans, trade protection through exchange controls, protective policies for national industries, market guarantees, factory land, and preferential construction policies for factories, related roads, and port facilities.

<sup>20</sup> A priority policy designed to aid industries producing materials vital for economic recovery such as iron, coal, chemical fertilizers, etc.

Compared with Western countries, in Japan the role of the State in economic growth and development has been great, and this has strengthened the position of the bureaucratic politicians as a power elite. This has meant that economic interests, through constant contact and cooperation with the bureaucracy, have been able to have their demands skillfully reflected in national policy. Economic interests, of course, provide the political world with funds in accordance with the implementation of policy, but these funds flow through bureaucratic channels, and this serves to strengthen the position of politicians with bureaucratic backgrounds.

However I would not deny that there has been a move recently, on the part of the whole nation including the economic world, to limit the priorities of the bureaucracy. Typical bureaucratic shortcomings are: (1) a peculiar sectarianism, (2) shortsightedness during annual budget deliberations, (3) lack of a long-range view or over-all perspective of events and circumstances, and (4) a conservative attitude toward reforming the administrative structure. These faults become most apparent in the implementation of policy.

Realistically, Japanese policy makers must free themselves from the bureaucracy's present sectarian mentality and strive for a broad, long-range view of matters in order to create policies corresponding to the new international environment of the Japanese economy. A general economic plan including a policy to increase national income, a plan for the redistribution of the labor force, urban planning, and a political and economic plan to open inroads abroad are called for.

It is worth noting that recently, one part of the financial world, which until now has abided by the unwritten law to stay clear of politics and leave political leadership to the bureaucracy, has thrown aside the old taboos and begun to make bold advances into Japanese political life. Thus, in addition to the original elite, another elite group of managers has begun to claim a place in the political arena long dominated by bureaucrats. Moreover, a third elite class has been formed by those from the news media and the academic world, but as a group the possibility of their entry into politics is not great. Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that politics in Japan has taken a new direction due to the emergence of a non-bureaucratic elite in political life. When this road has been explored and opened up, perhaps we will enter a new stage of politics.