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Parties and Politics in Contemporary Japan

Robert A. Scalapino
Junnosuke Masumi

ROBERT A. SCALAPINO

AND JUNNOSUKE MASUMI

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PREFACE

Much has been written in recent years about the study of comparative politics. To a considerable extent, this new writing stems from the discovery of the non-Western world by Western social scientists. In the future, no doubt, our pioneer voyages of today will be considered just as primitive as the voyage of Columbus to the "new world" five centuries ago. Fortunately, however, we can hope for rapid progress. The social scientists of Asia are now prepared to join with their counterparts in the West in the use of new data, techniques, and ideas.

This is a period when we need the widest possible exploration, using various combinations of methods and disciplines. It is our conviction that the science of comparative politics can best be advanced at this point by the development of empirical studies in depth, studies that seek to improve the techniques for the analysis of the political structure and process in a given society or culture, subsociety or subculture. Only when we have a number of such studies can we approach comparative politics with both precision and subtlety. Our purpose in this brief volume is to experiment with the union of several methods in an effort to shed new light upon selective aspects of political organization and procedure in

contemporary Japan. We have sought to combine a historical approach with certain social science techniques for purposes of establishing our basic hypotheses. Then we have attempted to test and illustrate these hypotheses by using a specific case study, in this instance the May–June incidents of 1960.

We have begun with the historical approach, because through this we hope to convey some flavor of the cultural background out of which modern Japan has emerged, and the cultural context in which the operations of Japanese politics take place. Perhaps we should make clear our use of the term "culture." We do not see culture as a static, organic, monolithic force. To us, culture is the product of an infinitely complex combination of forces, constantly in flux and to some extent in conflict, but wherein the dominant or uniform traits of any given moment serve as major determinants of the attitudes and actions of various human groups. Culture must encompass in some measure the totality of the society, both the dominant and the conflicting forces of value, organization, and behavior, both the indigenous and the foreign elements that influence a way of life. In using the concept of culture, the political scientist must think in dynamic terms and in terms of a balance of forces. Although no one will ever be able to analyze completely the chemical composition, as it were, of a given culture at a given time, the importance of quantification is implicit in our usage of this concept. Unless culture lends itself to the realities of social change as well as of dominant traits, unless it can encompass the elements of paradox, conflict, and confusion as well as those of symmetry, interrelation, and progression, it is of scant use to the political scientist.

Accepting these ideas, we can use the historical approach effectively to discern in general terms the type and amount of change that has characterized the evolution of modern Japanese politics since the Meiji era. Change is meaningful only when it is viewed against continuity, of course. Nor do these two concepts lie in total contradistinction. Change in any society is mainly the product of the gradual infusion of limited new elements into a situation where old ones continue to exist. Rarely is there a battle to the death, a preordained commitment to exclusiveness. As the

new infiltrates the old, the old influences the new. Japan is a magnificent example of this fact. Adaptation and fusion have been far more common characteristics than obliteration.

In discussing political or social change, two factors assume great importance. One is timing; the other is resources. Ours is a world in which there has occurred an increasing universalization of basic values. The historians of future generations will probably find this fact the most significant single development of the 20th century. In the zenith period of Western imperialism, values that had once been largely confined to a narrow rim of western Europe and the United States, values that had developed indigenously out of the evolution of these societies, suddenly acquired a universal appeal, at least in terms of the dominant elites. What are these values? Perhaps they can be summarized briefly in four words: progress, industrialization, science, and democracy. Who does not want these things today? The significant thing about our conflict with the Communists in the light of history may be not our differences, but the fact that we both covet the same ends; we both struggle for the right to be called progressive, industrialized, scientific, and democratic.

For this reason, the point in history at which a society enters the "modernization stream," or the point at which it emerges into the universalist, world channel, is of supreme importance. The nature and interrelation of economic, social, and political structure-processes will be profoundly affected. In these respects, it is much more logical to compare Japan with Germany—or even the Soviet Union—than with Great Britain or the United States, or, indeed, with much of Asia. The composite global knowledge of and experience with economic-political techniques at the particular time when a society enters the modernization stream, the prevailing world values and "waves of the future"—all are critically important factors in determining the tempo, structure, and processes that will characterize that society. We are now well aware of the fact that a given economic stage does not produce a given set of political institutions and processes—indeed, that 20th-century economic stages are not the same as those of the 18th and 19th centuries in terms of some of their most basic

characteristics. This is what makes the non-Western world significantly different from the so-called "advanced Western societies," in addition to the differences in cultural background.

Resources are a much more conventional element in connection with comparative politics, but, nonetheless, an element of deep and continuing significance. Location, topography, climate, size of area, natural and human resources—all are involved in our concept of resources. Certainly, this element has become more subject to control or compensation with the advance of science. Still, it provides definite limits or boundaries to political expression, directly or indirectly. In the case of most societies, resources used in this broad sense provide the critical limits or opportunities.

Having sought to deal with the above factors, at least by implication, in the historical background, we have then proceeded to attempt some quantification of a few specific, selected political elements of contemporary Japanese society. At every point, we have attempted to interrelate structure and process. In our opinion, it is impossible to separate them, and productive of error to attempt to do so. Political and social structure are closely tied, as we have attempted to show; the one is reflective of the other, and both can be understood only in terms of a fairly basic analysis of the political process, especially in view of the extensive fluidity that currently marks Japanese society. In this particular study, we have confined our interest to an attempt to measure the socioeconomic composition of the Japanese party elite, the relative importance of interest groups in connection with party structure and organization, and the elements affecting Japanese voting behavior at present. We are very much aware of the impossibility of precise measurements. We shall be content if the basic trends set forth in this work are correct, and if the composite method we have used has some merit for similar studies relating to other non-Western societies.

Finally, we wish to make it clear that we were not interested, here, in presenting a detailed, definitive study of the May–June incidents of 1960. We were interested in these incidents only as a case study relating to the hypotheses advanced earlier. Consequently, we have dealt with only those aspects of the inci-

dents that seemed germane to our interests, and only to the extent necessary to make our points.

As is always true, we are indebted to a number of people in connection with this manuscript. First, we should like to thank the Rockefeller Foundation, and especially Dr. Kenneth W. Thompson, for making this research possible. We should also like to express our appreciation to such colleagues as Ardath Burks, Nobutaka Ike, John Maki, David Sissons, and Robert Ward for helpful advice and suggestions. Since the manuscript was written in the United States, it was submitted to American scholars, but we are both deeply indebted to a large number of Japanese scholars for aid—past, present, and, we hope, future. We are also greatly appreciative of the labors of Mikio Higa, who compiled many of the statistics used in this study and prepared the index in our absence. We alone are responsible for the final product, but those mentioned above, together with our students and the members of the Center for Japanese Studies at Berkeley, have been extremely generous in reading and criticizing the original manuscript.

June, 1961

ROBERT A. SCALAPINO
JUNNOSUKE MASUMI

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INTRODUCTION

Japan recently experienced the greatest mass movement in her political history. Thirteen million people signed petitions requesting dissolution of the House of Representatives and the holding of new elections. Six million workers supported these efforts with work stoppages. Hundreds of thousands of Japanese citizens, many of them completely new to political activities, demonstrated in Tokyo streets and around the Diet building. No Japanese political movement of the past has equaled this in terms of mass participation and sustained activity. Its leadership, its tactics, and the broad causative forces that created it are likely to be the subjects of intensive analysis for the indefinite future.

The immediate issues in this crisis were the revised United States–Japan Security Treaty and the methods used by the Kishi government in obtaining its passage. But underlying these issues were others that pertained to the whole nature of Japanese politics in theory and in practice. This was the type of episode which, fully analyzed, might lay bare the very roots of the Japanese political process.

Will the May 19 incident and its aftermath achieve for Japan the symbolism achieved by the May 4 movement in

China? Certainly, many Japanese writers have tried to give it such connotations. The majority, however, have regarded it in a less sensational light as one of the many milestones in the political evolution of modern Japan, an event that will not acquire great historic significance in and of itself, but one that is reflective of the new sociopolitical forces now operative in Japan, forces that make this a truly transitional period. We still stand too close to the event to determine which of these two positions will ultimately be proven correct, although the latter position now seems closer to the facts. Nevertheless, it remains true that this crisis represented the most significant internal upheaval in Japan since the February 26 incident of 1936.

At the height of the May–June incident, it was frequently said that the whole future of Japanese democracy was at stake. What people meant by this varied greatly. The supporters of Mr. Kishi emphasized points entirely different from those raised by his opponents. In any case, such a statement is overly dramatic. The treaty crisis was a revelation more than a revolution. But this does not reduce its importance. Above all, it threw a strong spotlight upon the changing character of Japanese politics and the continuing weaknesses of Japanese democracy.

This is, therefore, an appropriate time to reappraise the political institutions and mores of Japan. In doing so, we intend to utilize several techniques. We shall begin with a brief historical survey. Our purpose here is threefold: to sketch with broad strokes the cultural background against which Japanese politics must be seen; to emphasize the particular timing of Japanese modernization, with its signal importance to every facet of the country's society; and to establish the necessity of viewing Japanese politics as a developmental process. Then we shall focus upon the contemporary political scene. Here, we shall utilize available social science techniques in examining data that pertains to political leadership, party organization, interest groups, and political behavior. Our aim will be to establish certain hypotheses about the Japanese political process. Finally, we shall use the May–June incident of 1960 as a case study against which to test these hypotheses.

I

THE BACKGROUND

The treaty crisis raised many questions. Some of these were simple, or at least obvious ones. Why did the Kishi cabinet have to resign when its party, the Liberal Democratic party, commanded an overwhelming majority in both houses of the Japanese Diet? Why did many of the Liberal Democratic leaders desert Kishi in his hour of need despite the fact that they had no significant differences with him over policy or even procedure? Why did the Socialists place such heavy emphasis upon unparliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities? Why did the general movement from the Diet to the streets occur so easily? Why did so many Japanese intellectuals participate directly in a political movement for the first time in history and regard their participation primarily as a struggle to preserve democracy against the "tyranny of the majority"? And, finally, why did the Japanese people seem reluctant to give the palm of victory to either side, showing instead a tendency to adopt a "plague on both your houses" attitude?

Behind these questions lie others that are less obvious in terms of the immediate events, but more fundamental. How should one define and classify the Japanese party system today? What forces—social, economic, and political—dominate the heights

of Japanese politics, and what is their relative strength? What is the status of public participation in Japanese politics? And, lastly, what ideologies of politics, more specifically, of democracy, are current in modern Japan?

There are no easy answers to these questions. We propose here merely to advance certain hypotheses, based essentially upon an examination of contemporary Japanese parties. Let us first dip briefly into Japanese history.[1] The Japanese party movement was a truly hybrid product, formed from the union of indigenous, traditional forces with multiple Western stimuli. Both the idea and the ideology of the modern parties came largely from the West, but their organizational structure and mode of operation reflected heavily the Japanese scene—past and present.

The idea of political parties on the Western model first came to Japan in the period around 1872, nearly two decades before parliamentary government was effected. Thus Japanese parties operated for a considerable period, at least sporadically, without an institutional context. This was but one example of the curious impact of Western politics upon the Japanese scene. It was possible to borrow the latest Western fashions in constitutionalism, parliaments, and parties, but sometimes these came out of phase and with a bewildering rapidity that bore scant relation to internal social readiness. This inevitably affected these new forces in every conceivable

[1] For the background of the Japanese party movement, in English, see Nobutaka Ike, *The Beginnings of Political Democracy in Japan* (Baltimore, 1950); Harold Quigley, *Japanese Government and Politics* (New York, 1933); and Robert A. Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1953).

In Japanese, see Horie Eiichi and Tōyama Shigeki (eds.), *Jiyūminken ki no kenkyū* ("Studies on the Civil Rights Era") (4 vols.; Tokyo, 1959–60); *Meiji ishin shi kenkyū kōza* ("Historical Research Series on the Meiji Restoration") (6 vols.; Tokyo, 1958–59); *Meiji shi kenkyū sōsho* ("Research Series on Meiji History") (10 vols.; Tokyo, 1957–59); Shinobu Seisaburō, *Taishō demokurashi shi* ("History of Taishō Democracy") (3 vols.; Tokyo, 1954–59); Tōyama Shigeki, Imai Seiichi, and Fujiwara Akira, *Shōwa shi* ("History of Shōwa") (rev. ed.; Tokyo, 1959); and Ishida Takeshi, *Kindai Nihon seiji kōzō no kenkyū* ("Studies on the Political Structure of Modern Japan") (Tokyo, 1956).

respect, from their *raison d'être* and their image in the Japanese mind to their modes of operation. And as institutions were borrowed, so were ideas. From men like John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Burke, Bluntschli, and many others came the ideas of liberty, progress, political competition, and majoritarianism, albeit with different emphases and approaches. Thus the early Meiji dissidents grasped both the *idea* of parties as potent weapons of peaceful opposition (in a period when military opposition was becoming increasingly difficult) and the *ideology* of liberalism as derived from Western experience.

But the central difficulties have already been suggested. The great historic problem of modern Japanese politics has been the high degree of separation between those formal political institutions borrowed from the West, together with the set of ideas that accompanied them, and the much broader social institutions bred from within Japanese society, together with the set of ideas that accompanied these. The latter forces were certainly influenced and affected by Westernism—in ever greater degree. But the timing and extent of that effect, and the very fact that they had a deeply rooted indigenous base spelled out the fundamental difference between them and such overseas imports as the National Diet and the political parties.

Thus the Diet and the parties have remained somewhat foreign to the Japanese people. It cannot be denied, of course, that indigenous procedures have penetrated these institutions in many ways. Some of these procedures, indeed, have made their own contributions to the estrangement of the Japanese people from politics. The fact that the parties are essentially closed societies, mutual aid organizations of politicians in the manner of exclusive clubs, is more a product of Japanese "feudalism" than of the modern West. Nevertheless, such an institution as the Diet is sufficiently Western in its concept to demand rules drawn from that context if it is to bear any relation in function to its name. There is a certain premium upon direct debate, for instance, and the capacity to communicate with the opposition; hence there is the necessity to protect minority rights and accept majority decisions. Without these principles, no democratic parliament can

function. And yet, in Japan, the historic principles of organization and decision making were different: not direct debate, but indirect negotiation; not communication with the opposition, but aloofness or struggle. Communication was reserved for one's ingroup, and *political* commitment to this group was only a part of one's total commitment to it. Moreover, decision making within the group and between it and other groups was based upon consensus, not majoritarianism.

To bridge these differences, or to find some method of harmonizing them, has been a formidable challenge. The same issues have existed in the ideological realm. What are the central goals of Western liberalism? Are they not to emphasize the innate dignity of the individual and give priority to his total development as the supreme *raison d'être* of the state, to give equal importance to minority rights and majority rule, to stress meaningful political competition as an essential element in freedom? But all of these goals had to confront the immediate needs and nature of Japanese society: a society lacking individualism, schooled in consensus, bred to unity, and facing the great problems of backwardness and foreign pressures. Under the circumstances, nationalism was a supremely logical force to cultivate in order to induce public sacrifice and stimulate rapid change. And tutelage of the masses by a small, cohesive elite seemed almost a compelling necessity.

It is not surprising that Meiji liberalism thus had a strongly nationalist flavor, one not wholly compatible with the current Western liberal creed. Nor is it astonishing that the later, more mature liberalism of the Taishō-Shōwa eras often sought to honor freedom and the individual by flying socialist banners, democratic and otherwise. The political ideology of modern Japan has been derived largely from the West, and the struggle to make it consistent and compatible with Japanese society has not yet been successfully resolved.

Perhaps the evolution of the Japanese parties during the period prior to 1945 can be divided into three basic eras. In the initial stage, the parties may be considered a part of the protest movement, an element in the opposition to the new Meiji government and many of its trends. This was an elitist protest. Almost

all of the participants in the party movement came from the ex-samurai class; they had been members of the feudal aristocracy. In considerable measure, it was also a sectional protest. The first parties were composed of the men from Tosa and Hizen, two ex-fiefdoms that had helped to promote the restoration of 1867 and whose representatives had subsequently participated in the new government, but who had found the supremacy of the men from Chōshū and Satsuma unpalatable. In other times, the struggle for political power would have been decided on the battlefield, and, indeed, violence did occur, culminating in the Satsuma rebellion of 1877. But dissidents now had new weapons—the words of Mill and Rousseau, the theories of liberty and constitutionalism.

The struggle was not wholly a sectional struggle for power, as the Satsuma rebellion itself would indicate. There were many issues implicit in the tremendous drive toward modernization that were of direct consequence to the ex-samurai class. Centralization of power was posed against the previously high degree of local autonomy. Urbanism and industrialization underwritten by government aid was a challenge to historic agrarian supremacy. The abolition of feudal class distinctions, the inauguration of private property, the institution of a conscription army, and many other socio-economic changes threatened the status and function of the former elite. For many of that elite, these were troubled, transitional times. What was more natural than that one of their diverse reactions would be the creation of an opposition party movement flying liberal banners and generally spearheaded by younger intellectuals?

Whatever the broad egalitarian trends in operation during the Meiji era, however, this was scarcely the era of the common man. And yet, the protest movement of this period was known as the *jiyūminken* or "civil rights" movement, and the first parties were called "popular" or "people's" parties, despite the fact that their leaders were almost exclusively ex-samurai.[2] But

[2] In addition to ex-samurai, the civil rights movement attracted various agrarian elements, particularly after 1880. Some of these politically activated persons were or became members of the prefectural assemblies, first organized in 1879. They can be regarded as the nucleus for the "pure politician" group within the parties.