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SECTION X

POPULAR ELECTIONS

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The national elections held in April 1946 and in April 1947 were notable milestones of Japan's march toward democracy under the Occupation. The response of the people of Japan to the opportunities afforded them in these elections vindicated the faith placed in their desire and ability to advance toward self-government.

Seldom in history have the people of a nation had the opportunity, in such brief compass of time and by such a peaceful process, to upset generations of history and tradition in the manner of selecting those who were to govern over them. Certainly never before in Japan had the opportunity been presented for virtually the entire adult population -- male and female -- to participate in the election of not only the members of the so-called Lower House of the Diet but also the members of the Upper House, the chief executives of their prefectural, city, town and village governments and the members of the legislative bodies of those local entities.

The Potsdam Declaration outlined the major objectives of the Allied Occupation. Among those were the requirements that "the Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies" and that there shall be "established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government."

The Occupation early established the policy of using the established Japanese governmental machinery to carry out Occupation objectives, affairs of government, and, above all, to develop indigenous political and administrative machinery for democratic reconstruction. If democracy was to be fostered in Japan it would be necessary for the people through their representatives

in the Diet to settle the vital problems of governmental, political, social and economic reform toward democratic ends. But the Diet in existence at the outset of the Occupation was obviously unfit to serve as an instrument for the democratic reconstruction of Japan. More than eighty per cent of its membership had been selected by General Tojo and the Imperial Rule Assistance Association in the 1942 election. Its members, identified with ultranationalistic and imperialistic policies, lacked the confidence of the bulk of Japanese people, especially those who were eager to rebuild the country along peaceful democratic lines.

There were many cogent reasons for the creation of a fresh legislative body:

1. To eliminate from public life those who were tainted with war guilt. Nearly the entire membership of the existing Diet belonged to this category.

2. To dispel confusion resulting from the failures of discredited political leadership.

3. To introduce new political figures into responsible public life.

4. To reflect current political thinking of the Japanese people.

5. To establish the basis for executive authority responsible to the people.

6. To provide means for legislative decision on major issues affecting the livelihood of the entire Japanese people and the future structure of the Japanese community.

7. To provide a forum for political expression and a constructive outlet for long-repressed political energies.

8. To provide the legislation required for the implementation of SCAP directives.

9. To avoid the use of the undemocratic method of government by imperial rescripts and ordinances.

The national election conducted on April 10, 1946 was indicative of the unmistakable temper of the people in general in favor of democratic procedures. The leaders selected were the men who would draft the new Constitution for the Japanese nation. Therefore, the election can be regarded as an initial effort to develop the "political wilderness" of Japan.

More important in this respect, however, were the subsequent series of elections held throughout April of 1947 in which every elective public office in the land was at stake -- local and national, legislative and executive. Merely to say that the first public officials to serve under the new Constitution, which went into effect on May 3, 1947, were selected in these elections would stress their significance sufficiently. But at least five other reasons combined to augment their abiding importance: for the first time the Japanese people voted for the members of a House of Representatives newly become "the highest organ of the state"; the first elections for the House of Councillors; the first popular elections for local chief executives; the first popular elections for effective local assemblies; and the first elections of any type supervised by representatives of the electorate rather than by the government itself.

II. REPORT OF 1946 ELECTION

Japan's first post-war election was conducted on April 10, 1946. Nearly three-fourths of the qualified voters went to the polls, a high percentage considering the time and circumstances. Contrary to expectations, women turned out in large numbers.

The conduct of the election was in the hands of the Japanese Government. Occupation forces carefully observed campaign and election procedures through-

out the country but refrained scrupulously from any kind of interference. No disorder was reported on election day and the number of irregularities was negligible.

1. Precautions to Insure Fair Election. On April 10, 1946, 26,000,000 voters went to the polls to choose a new House of Representatives. The election under the new Electoral Law once having been authorized,* it was important that the spirit as well as the letter of the law should be observed. To that end the Japanese Government plugged a loophole in the law by promulgating Imperial Ordinance No. 96 placing "third party" campaign expenses under the limitations imposed upon each candidate's campaign expenditures, thus insuring equal treatment of those with and those without wealthy financial supporters. Next, through Imperial Ordinance No. 101, implementing SCAP's Purge Directive of January 4, 1946, relating to political associations, all political parties were ordered to register and to report substantial contributions, with names and addresses of their donors.[1] By ordering these reports open for public inspection and setting the limit of a "substantial contribution" as low as ¥1,000, the public was assured complete information concerning the major financial backing behind the parties. The press made ample use of this information.

A third measure was effected through Home Ministry Ordinance No. 11, by which all parties and candidates engaging in the election campaign were made to report weekly, for public inspection, all receipts and disbursements over ¥100 during the whole period of the campaign. Wide publicity was given to these reports and very revealing data were thereby brought into the light of public criticism.

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* This law consisted of extensive revisions of the 1925 "Law for the Election of Members of the House of Representatives (as amended in 1926, 1934 and 1945)."

1 Appendix B: 5e, Abolition of Political Parties, Associations, Societies, etc., Imperial Ordinance 101, February 23, 1946

Still another measure was taken to insure a fair election. This was the prohibition, issued to prefectural governors, of any pre-censorship of the election bulletin, an official publication containing program statements and biographies of candidates, which were distributed to all registered voters. "Editing" of each candidate's personal statement to the voting public was thereby eliminated, and the voters received an "unexpurgated" version of the candidates' views.

Finally, the campaign and the election itself were brought under the close personal observation of the Occupation forces by a directive which provided surveillance by troops in the field. Thus by every possible means, it was made certain that violations of any nature mitigating against a free and fair expression of the popular will would be brought immediately to SCAP's attention. The instructions issued to the Commanding General, Eighth Army, stressed this injunction: "Remember that this is a Japanese election under a Japanese law. Actual policing will be done by Japanese officials, parties, candidates, newspapers and private individuals. The charge that this election is being conducted under the threat of Yankee bayonets must not be permitted to arise. In no case should you interfere with the administrative authority of Japanese officials or threaten the use of force. Your duties are only to observe, refer violations to Japanese officials, and report to higher authority. ...Assurance of a free and untrammeled election is a major responsibility of the Occupation forces. Your activities will contribute substantially to that result."

2. Activities by Occupation Forces.

a. Observing and Reporting on the Election. Government Section had the responsibility for developing and carrying out plans for observing

and reporting on the election. In the field were Eighth Army Military Government Teams or detachments located at prefectural capitals and other key points in each prefecture. Since these teams did not have sufficient personnel adequately to cover their respective areas of jurisdiction, it was decided to augment the Military Government teams by personnel from the tactical units and from the Counter Intelligence Corps teams in the field.

Five orientation meetings were conducted by the Government Section in various parts of Japan. These meetings were held in Sasebo, Kure, Kyoto, Tokyo, and Sendai. On March 18, representatives of Government Section met with representatives of all Military Government teams and members of the major tactical units, including Eighth Army, British Commonwealth Occupation Forces, I Corps, IX Corps, 1st Cavalry Division, 11th Airborne Division, and the 2nd Marine Division. At this time all units were provided with sufficient copies of the prepared materials for distribution to all concerned, and the instructions were discussed in full detail.

Each Military Government team was directed by Corps to prepare complete detailed plans indicating the number of officers that could be assigned to observe and report on the election, the extent of coverage of the prefectures, the number of tactical officers and enlisted men that would be required to augment their forces, and the disposition of all forces in the field. These plans, which were completed for all prefectures not less than fifteen days prior to the election, were reviewed by representatives of the Government Section.

The political campaign and the election were observed and reported in all prefectures in Japan. Field forces representing Military Government and

tactical units or CIC operated during the political campaign and election, and were distributed throughout each prefecture in proportion to population spread, with the additional considerations of location of typical rural and urban areas, and types of economic development such as agricultural, fishing, and industrial. In the case of Yamagata prefecture plans were changed at the last moment to extend coverage to a small community where possible violations were reported. The plan for each prefecture was adjusted so that a maximum coverage could be obtained, using the personnel available and recognizing the differences in terrain and other local characteristics.

b. Observation During the Campaign. During the campaign each Military Government team and tactical unit was charged with definite responsibilities. In every prefecture an initial contact was made with the prefectural governor, who was advised that the Occupation Forces would observe and report on the election, maintain an attitude of impartiality and expect the Japanese Government and officials to bear the responsibility of conducting a free and untrammeled election. Throughout the country newspapers reported that Military Government officers, aided by tactical units, would observe the elections to help safeguard the right of free expression by the Japanese people.

Care was taken to publicize the fact that clearance of candidates by the Japanese Government under the terms of the purge directive of January 4, 1946 did not imply SCAP sanction, or indorsement, as some had claimed. Further, it was noted that the records of all candidates would be subject to SCAP review.

In practically all prefectures the same information was passed on to the prefectural chief of police. In most prefectures, this information was disseminated through Japanese channels direct from the governor or the chief of

police to all mayors, village headmen and subchiefs of police.

Military Government teams made periodic checks to see that campaign expenditures were reported weekly as provided by law and that reported expenditures did not exceed the legal maximum, which varied according to the population of the district but approximated on the average ¥20,000 per candidate.

The Occupation Forces were also charged with the responsibility of receiving and passing on to the prefectural governors all complaints of violations of the election law. Any complaints received were investigated generally by the police at the direction of the governor. The number of violations reported prior to election day was negligible.

The Occupation Forces initiated action which resulted in the preparation of news articles by the prefectural authorities describing the voters' responsibilities, procedures to be followed in voting and penalties that might be expected for violations of the election laws.

c. Activities on Election Day. On election day the activity of the Occupation Forces reached its peak. About 12,000 of the 21,089 polling places in Japan were visited. Coverage of polling places averaged about 90 per cent in cities and 40 per cent in rural areas. In some prefectures close to 100 per cent coverage was achieved. Many polling places were covered two or three times.

These visits were not perfunctory but included careful observation of the arrangements and procedures followed, as well as consultation with the election officials. Observers checked to make sure that the names of all candidates were posted in front of the polling place as required by law and that the regulations concerning election posters were not being violated.

They also noted the procedure followed from the time the voter entered the polling place until he deposited his ballot in the ballot box and left the polls. Methods of election officials in identifying voters were noted. The actions of voters and officials within the polling place were scrutinized to see that secrecy of the ballot was not violated.

After the balloting Occupation Forces checked to ascertain whether adequate provision had been made by the Japanese authorities to safeguard the ballots between the closing of the polls and the counting of votes. There were no reported instances of attempts to tamper with the ballot boxes. During the counting, Occupation Forces made frequent inspections.

d. Conduct of the Election. The consensus of the Occupation Forces who observed the election was as follows:

> "The arrangements by the Japanese officials for handling voters in the polling places were worked out in great detail and remarkably efficient. The Japanese people were orderly at the polls; there were no recorded instances of misconduct or disorder. Women, voting for the first time, appeared to have no difficulty with the voting procedure."

In sharp contrast to the police control formerly exercised in Japanese elections, the police were conspicuous by their absence. There were no reports of interference by the police in any prefecture, nor of intimidation of voters at or near the polls. No charges of indirect pressure on voters by employers, social leaders, cultural or economic agencies were brought to SCAP's attention by any parties or defeated candidates.

Some observers reported that the Japanese system of registration was unsatisfactory. Much time was involved in checking on voters who had mislaid their identification cards, owing to the lack of system in keeping records. Complaints were heard of the lack of a printed ballot, making it necessary for voters to write in the names of the candidates for whom they

were voting. The write-in ballot is traditional in Japan and was defended on the ground that it tended to prevent corrupt practice and also served as a mild literacy test.

c. Omissions from Electoral Lists. Charges appeared in the press that large numbers of voters had been deprived of their votes through failure on the part of authorities to place their names on the official registration lists. These charges were immediately investigated by the Home Ministry. Preliminary reports indicated that less than one per cent of the electorate was disfranchised in this manner. In most cases, omissions were due to the voters' change in residence since the previous November; some were due to clerical errors. The greatest number of complaints came from cities such as Aomori and Sendai where there had been a heavy displacement of population owing to destruction by bombing.

The Home Ministry made a thorough investigation of all cases reported. Evidence revealed that the number disfranchised was too small in any way to have affected election results.

3. General Analysis of the Election.

a. Number of Parties and Candidates. Competition for seats in the Diet was keen, with nearly six times as many candidates registered as there were seats to be filled.

On April 3, when the registration closed, 2,781 candidates had entered the race; of these five had died and seventy-nine had withdrawn, leaving 2,697.

Distribution by parties was as follows:

Liberal	482
Progressive	373
Social Democratic	330
Communist	142
Cooperative	93
Minor parties	366
Independents	795
Total	2,781

Eighty-two of the candidates were women. Ages of candidates ranged from 25 to 87. Candidates who had previously served in the Diet numbered only 147; the predominance of "new faces" reflected the results of the purge. Small parties, local and national, numbered 251.

b. Campaign Activities. As election day approached campaign activities increased in tempo. Parties and candidates appealed to the voters by means of public meetings, radio broadcasts, campaign literature, personal solicitation and other methods.

During the last three weeks of March in the Tokyo area 2,215 political meetings were reported with a total attendance of 169,281. In allocating radio time on both national and local stations care was exercised to make a fair distribution among the parties and candidates. Few instances of disorder were reported at campaign meetings.

c. Press Coverage. During the weeks preceding the election, political discussion dominated the press. The progress of the campaign, both nationally and in the prefectures, was reported in detail. Political writers vied with one another in attempting to predict the outcome.

Political commentators almost unanimously expressed serious concern over the possibility of wide abstention from voting. This prediction resulted from general preoccupation throughout Japan with the urgent problem of obtaining food, clothing, and shelter. It was pointed out that most candidates were new and unknown figures who would bring a fresh point of view to bear upon the serious problems facing Japan.

Most newspapers refrained from supporting individual parties or candidates, although an undercurrent of sympathy for the Social Democrats could be detected in metropolitan journals. The press in general analyzed the campaign as a whole, displaying a keenly critical attitude and exhorting the voters to do likewise.

d. Efforts to Stimulate Voting. The press exerted itself vigorously to stimulate public interest in the election. It repeatedly admonished the citizens to vote and to vote intelligently.

Yomiuri declared that the world was watching the Japanese election. "It is all right for us to criticize the Government," wrote Mainichi, "but at the same time we must endeavor to solve the problem by our own efforts. This election is the first step toward acting for ourselves."

Various devices were used to stimulate interest in the election. The newspaper Asahi sponsored a meeting on March 23, 1946, at which representatives from the five major parties were invited to speak. Attendance at this meeting was estimated at 4,000. Yomiuri conducted a straw vote in which 25,000 readers participated. Newspaper space was devoted to explaining the mechanics of registration and of voting under the new restricted plural voting system.

The Japanese Government, especially the Ministries of Education and Home Affairs, conducted a campaign to stimulate voting. Wide use was made of handbills, printed instructions on voting procedure, pamphlets, school posters and motion pictures. Meetings of neighborhood associations were held to explain the plural voting system. Through these associations and other means the idea was fostered that failure to vote would be a national disgrace.

On April 8, Prime Minister Kijuro Shidehara issued a statement urging all citizens to exercise their franchise. On April 9, the day preceding the election, Shidehara again exhorted the voters over a nation-wide radio hookup, saying that world attention was focused on the election as a starting point in the democratization of Japan.

e. Campaign Expenditures. Survey of the campaign fund reports submitted by all political parties to the Home Ministry revealed that, except for

the Social Democrats, the expenditures of each party were roughly proportional to the number of its candidates. The average sums spent per candidate ranged from ¥2,300 for the Progressives to ¥4,000 for the Liberals. The Social Democratic Party, however, spent an average of but ¥415 per candidate.

When broken down to show the efficiency with which money was spent, the picture shows wider variations. Each Diet seat cost the successful Liberal Party an average of ¥13,500, as compared to the Social Democratic expense of ¥1,500 per seat. The Progressives spent ¥9,200 per seat, the Cooperatives ¥17,750, while the five Communist seats cost an average of ¥76,579 each. The relatively high expenses of the Communist and Cooperative parties were the more surprising as their contests had supposedly been staged in carefully selected areas.

f. Campaign Issues. All parties in appealing to the voters stressed the promise of providing for their immediate needs, such as food, clothing, housing, farm necessities, and jobs. As in other countries, the campaign promises tended to be vague as to the exact methods by which these promises were to be fulfilled.

All major parties, except the Communist, endorsed the general principles of the proposed draft constitution and all save the Communists advocated retention of the Emperor as a national symbol. The Social Democrats emphasized more than other parties the necessity of eliminating the Emperor's powers and strengthening those of the elected legislature. The Communists called for abolition of the Emperor system and establishment by peaceful means of a people's republic with a unicameral legislature. The election of prefectural governors by the people was a popular issue. It was specifically promised by the Liberal

and Cooperative parties and supported by many small parties.

In every election district major emphasis in the campaign was placed on the problem of food. Virtually every candidate promised to raise the rice ration to three go (a go is equivalent to .36 pints) per person.

The system of compulsory rice deliveries was criticized by all parties. The Communists flatly opposed compulsory collections. Both they and the Social Democrats advocated control of rice collections by regular committees, though differing as to method. Other parties echoed this more faintly by calling for "rationalization" or "democratization" of the delivery system.

All parties called for a curb on inflation and violently criticised the Government's ineffectual efforts to solve this problem.

Taxation of war profits was endorsed by the Progressives, Liberals, and Cooperatives; the Communists would confiscate them entirely. Some kind of general propoerty tax was favored by the Progressives, Liberals, Social Democrats, and Communists. Payment of compensation to war industries was in general opposed by all parties. Most major parties proposed reduction or postponement of the payment of interest and principal on the war debt. The Social Democrats would cancel payments to large holders of war bonds. All parties called for increased production, speedy reconversion and reconstruction.

On broader issues of economic policy for post-war Japan, campaign statements gave only general indication of party attitudes. The Progressives and Liberals clearly desired restoration of free enterprise so far as practicable under existing conditions and advocated certain measures to aid businessmen. The Social Democrats put forward a moderate socialist program including nationalization of banks and key industries and a planned economy. They also advocated shorter hours, a minimum wage and other benefits to wage workers, as well as

assistance to small-scale business.

The Communist program was essentially similar to that of the Social Democrats, though it placed more stress on "soaking the rich." The Cooperatives based their hopes on a thoroughgoing application of the principle of cooperative enterprise. Both Social Democrats and Communists favored participation of the workers in management, another practical question currently in the limelight. Nearly all parties went on record as favoring some form of social insurance.

All party platforms mentioned agrarian reform. The Progressives and Liberals favored an increase in the number of small landowners and payment of rents in cash or in kind. The Social Democrats proposed government purchase of the lands of absentee owners for re-sale to their present cultivators. The Communists advocated confiscation of idle and absentee-owned land and its distribution to working farmers.

g. Interest in the Election. Prior to election the apparent calm of the Japanese electorate misled even seasoned political observers into the delusion that Japan was apathetic toward the election.

Contrary to these expectations the turnout was heavy on election day. According to final official figures, 72.1 per cent of the registered voters cast their ballots. More than three-fourths of the men and two-thirds of the women voted. The unexpected attendance of women at the polls and the victory of so many women candidates indicated that, despite the novelty of universal suffrage, the Japanese people were making sound progress toward true democracy and they exercised shrewd judgment in differentiating among a host of candidates. Party labels meant comparatively little to them, as is evident in Tokyo District No. 1 where the three top contestants were the Liberal, Communist,

and Social Democratic candidates, the last named a woman. Japanese electors cast their ballots for individuals rather than for parties.

h. Participation of Women in the Election. Miss Ichikawa Fusae, dean of women suffragists, told the Osaka Mainichi two days prior to the voting that in all probability 90 percent of the Japanese women would abstain from the polls on election day. Political observers of the Osaka-Kyoto-Kobe area declared that not one woman had even the faintest chance of being elected to the Diet.

Both contentions were disproved. Japanese women took advantage of their newly-acquired suffrage and voted heavily, with 13,000,000 or 66 percent of an approximate total of 20,000,000 eligible women voters casting their ballots. The male vote was 79 percent of the eligible. The best that pre-election speculation had foreseen was a women's vote ranging between 30 percent and 60 percent.

Thirty-eight women were elected out of seventy-nine women candidates. By party, the breakdown was as follows:

Liberal Party.....	5	candidates
Progressive Party.....	6	"
Social Democratic Party.....	8	"
Communist Party.....	1	"
Independents.....	10	"
Minor Parties.....	8	"

The only all-women's party, the New Japan Women's Party (Shin Nihon Fujin-to), succeeded in electing one candidate to the Diet.

Mrs. Michiko Yamazaki, Social Democrat from Shizuoka Prefecture, led all women candidates with an aggregate of 191,293 votes, as compared to 211,146 for the male candidate who received the greatest number of votes.

The eminent suffragist, Mrs. Shizue Kato, better known as the former Baroness Ishimoto, was another successful woman candidate. In a press interview,

Mrs. Kato called the election a vindication of the women's sense of political responsibility.

2. The Composition of the New Diet. The major parties aligments in the House of Representatives as a result of the elections were as follows:

Party	Old Diet	New Diet	Women In new Diet	New House of Representatives: Those in last Diet	Those in former Diet	New Faces
Progressives	274	93	6	13	10	70
Liberals	46	139	5	14	23	102
Social Democrats	17	92	8	7	15	70
Cooperatives		14			1	13
Communists		5	1			5
Minor Parties		38	8		1	37
Independents	72	83	10	4	1	78
Vacancies	57	2				
	466	466	38	38	51	375

The composition of the Diet that emerged out of the election of 1946 contrasted sharply with former law-making bodies in Japan.

In pre-war Diets, an overwhelming preponderance of members were lawyers, big business representatives, and professional politicians. The new Diet, however, contained a large proportion of representatives who may be loosely described as "intellectuals." According to a survey made by the Kyodo news agency, only 52 lawyers, 32 corporation directors, and only six "politicians" were included in the newly-elected Diet. Thirty-two educators, 22 authors, 13 physicians, and 49 farmers indicate the non-professional nature of the members which comprised Japan's new legislative body.

It is also noteworthy that in a country where age is given preference, the average member of the new Diet was two years younger than in the previous legislature. Also three-fifths of the members held college or university degrees.

The most convincing contrast, however, lay in the fact that while the previous Diet, elected under the Tojo regime in 1942, was a one-party legislature, the new Diet represented no less than 33 political parties, in addition to 83 members classed as Independents. Never before in the history of Japan, were so many different points of view represented in the national legislature with, nevertheless, a few strong political groups at the center. Election results, moreover, showed that the Japanese people adopted a middle course. All groups recognised the need for change but few favored either the extreme right or the extreme left. No party received a majority vote.

The new Diet, composed in overwhelming degree of men whom the Japanese described as "new faces", was expected to bring a fresh point of view to bear upon the urgent problems facing the country. The old-line politicians had all but disappeared, to be replaced by younger, earnest men, adequately prepared by education and ability to cope with the solution of Japan's difficulties. "There is no question", wrote the Nippon Times editorially, "that the old order is doomed and that the new liberal movement, though not yet in full tide, is sweeping onward toward unprecedented levels."

4. Summary and Statement by the Supreme Commander on the Election. For the first time in many decades, on April 10, 1946, Japan conducted a free, fair, and honest election. Careful observation and investigation failed to reveal any substantial police or official pressure, corruption, intimidation or irregularities. No external barriers prevented a free expression of the people's choice. Public interest in the election was remarkably high in view of prevailing conditions. The results reflected the popular will in so far as its political expression had been consciously formulated.*

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*For an analysis of the political effects of the election, see Section XI "POLITICAL PARTIES".

The significance of the election was summarized in the following statement issued by the Supreme Commander on April 23, 1946:

"Pure democracy is inherently a spiritual quality which voluntarily must spring from the determined will of the people. It thus, if it is to become firmly rooted, may not be imposed upon a people by force, trickery or coercion -- nor is it a quality for barter or trade. All men, since the beginning of time, have had the smoldering desire to achieve democracy -- too few have had the unrestricted right to express that desire for it -- fewer still to achieve it.

"It was Lincoln who said 'the people are wiser than their rulers.' The soundness of this statement is historically evident -- and the Japanese people provide no exception. Given the opportunity for free expression of their popular will, they responded wholeheartedly; and, rejecting leadership dedicated to the political philosophies of the two extremes, both of the right and of the left, which experience has shown in practice inevitably lead to the same result -- regimentation of the masses and the suppression of human liberty -- they took a wide central course which will permit the evolvement of a balanced program of government designed best to serve their interests as a people.

"Democracy has thus demonstrated a healthy forward advance. It is for the newly elected representatives of the people in the National Diet, in vindication of the faith of the electorate, now to consolidate and further that advance by developing a program of sound and constructive legislation."

III. REPORT OF THE 1947 ELECTIONS

In anticipation of the enforcement of the new Constitution on May 3, 1947, a series of elections was held in Japan throughout April of that year in which every elective public office in the land was at stake, -- local and national, legislative and executive. During the month, therefore, the Japanese people

went to the polls four times to choose a total of 205,062 officials.

The political fermentation in Japan evidenced in demonstrations and strikes throughout 1946 and early 1947, and culminating in a proposed general strike on February 1, 1947, had indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the Yoshida Cabinet, particularly in respect to its financial and foodstuffs policies. Although it had long been obvious that most demonstrations were carefully staged to suggest a degree of popular support they had never commanded, it nevertheless seemed apparent that the Cabinet had lost heavily in popular support. Indeed, a public opinion survey conducted in January by the newspaper Asahi had indicated that 45.3 percent of those questioned favored the opposition Social Democratic Party more than the combined percentages of those who supported the two government parties.

The timeliness of a new general election to stabilize the political situation and to stimulate the process of democratization was suggested in a letter of the Supreme Commander to Prime Minister Yoshida on February 6. The text of the letter follows:

"I believe the time has come for a general election. Momentous changes in internal structure, in economic outlook, and in the whole fabric and pattern of Japanese life have occurred since the last general election nearly a year ago.

"It is necessary, in the near future, to obtain another democratic expression of the people's will on the fundamental issues with which Japanese society is now confronted. In this way we will once more advance in the process of democracy which now governs this state.

"The exact time and details are matters which I leave to the discretion of the Japanese Government, but the election should take place as

soon as practicable after the close of the present session of the Diet so that a new legislative body may initiate and synchronise with the introduction and effectuation of the new Constitution.

"The past year has been one of accomplishment. I look with equal confidence to the future."

1. General Significance of the New Elections. The publication of the Supreme Commander's letter received a hearty welcome. The significance of holding new general elections was reflected in the pre-election reactions of the Japanese press and in the general popular interest. Both press and citizenry were portentously aware of free and fair elections as one of the significant methods of achieving the aims of the Potsdam Declaration. It was recognised throughout Japan that the elections provided such an opportunity as would rarely be available for illustrating with dramatic emphasis the emergence in Japan of at least one of the distinguishing qualities of a modern democratic state: the guarantee of fair and impartial electoral processes and procedures.

Aside from their national and international significance, the elections of 1947 were also of marked interest in the field of local government. As the first post-war local government elections, the elections for local executives and local assemblies on the 5th and 30th of April would be a barometer of the extent to which liberal tendencies, already evident in the national arena, had penetrated into the local communities. The last major local government elections had been held in 1939; local assemblies were still regarded as strongholds of feudalism.

In the past, local government officials had been chosen by methods which made no proviso for popular selection or desires; governors were appointed by the Home Ministers; city mayors and town and village heads were chosen by

local assemblies from lists approved by prefectural governors, and heads of Tokyo wards were appointed by the governor of Tokyo.

Revision of local government legislation providing for the popular election of local chief executives thus marked a sharp break from the past: the Japanese people were afforded not only their first opportunity in history to select their local chief executives, but also their first opportunity to establish local governments which would be other than pale reflections of centralized authority and over which the voters themselves could exercise continuing and effective control.

The April elections also represented Japan's first elections for local assemblies on the basis of universal suffrage and the first election for local assemblies in which membership had been more than an honorary position. Revised local government legislation applied with equal effect to prefectural, city, town, village, and Tokyo ward assemblies. Qualifications for voting or election were reduced to the simplest common denominator; twenty years of age and six months residence in a given locality. Powers of assemblies were increased sufficiently to guarantee that the executive and legislative branches of local governments would be on a plane of equality and that local legislation would be free from domination by the central government.

Also of primary importance was the fact that these were Japan's first publicly administered elections. In the past, all elections were supervised in detail by government officials, with the Home Ministry exercising control on behalf of the Government. The new electoral committees, exercising full and complete powers over the administration of elections, were chosen by local assemblies; prefectural committees by the corresponding prefectural assemblies, village committees by the corresponding village assemblies, etc. Inasmuch as

each member of a local assembly cast but a single vote in the assembly's election of committee members, committees were thus roughly representative of the political complexion of local assemblies and of local electorates as well.

All in all, approximately 10,500 election administration committees were established throughout Japan: prefectural committees had six members each; city, town, village, and ward committees four each; and the committee representing the national constituency of the House of Councillors had ten. In essence, therefore, in the elections of April 1947 control and supervision of all Japanese elections was transferred for the first time from one man, -- the Home Minister, -- to approximately 50,000 citizens representing all shades of political opinion and all strata of society and all elected by a free and democratic process.

A wide variety of pre-election measures were adopted to insure the carrying out of democratic elections. These precautions may be grouped into four categories: measures taken to (1) strengthen election laws; (2) screen candidates; (3) insure non-interference by the police; and (4) provide for surveillance by Occupation Forces.

In so far as counting and tabulation were concerned, not only did every candidate have the right to have a witness present at every step in the voting and counting process at every polling place and ballot counting station in Japan, but every Japanese citizen had the further right to bring any protest he might have to the attention of the Occupation Forces as well as to his own Government.

With respect to the laws, every step in the electoral process, from the filling of candidacy and the registration of voters to the final tabulation of results was fully protected by laws and safeguards comparable to those of

any other democratic nation.* In so far as violations of these laws were concerned, not only were Japanese procedures of investigation, indictment and trial found to be highly competent and satisfactory but once again full opportunity was afforded all citizens to bring any criticisms of methods to the attention of surveillance personnel. The revealing fact that indictments for election law violations for all five 1947 elections totalled only 2,997 as compared to 2,632 in the one election of 1946 was an indication that political morality was markedly improved. The figure of 2,997 included all alleged violations from all sources.

In this connection, it is imperative to note that the vast majority of claims of election law violations involved such crimes as bribery of voters, house to house canvassing for votes, and violations of the poster law. For all the 42,000 polling places and 11,000 ballot counting stations in all Japan and for all the 200,000,000 ballots which were counted during the five elections there were only a handful of charges made anywhere, -- by the press, or public, or candidates or parties, -- of improper casting of votes, and no charges were made of miscounting of votes.

Broadening of the franchise went hand in hand with the strengthening of the election laws. Revision of the House of Representatives Election Law prior to the April 1946 elections had been marked by the greatest possible single step toward universal adult suffrage; the enfranchisement of women, which in a single move had more than doubled the number of those eligible to vote. The same law had also reduced the voting age from 25 to 20.

In preparation for the 1947 elections, therefore, it was felt that only three changes in the laws needed to be made to ensure the broadest possible extension of the franchise: 2/ (1) granting of the franchise to certain minor groups

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*See Handbook and Laws for Japanese Diet Elections, April 1947, compiled by Government Section, GHQ, SCAP

2/ Appendix H: 1, "Amendment to the Law for the Election of the Members of the House of Representatives; Law No. 43," March 31, 1947

previously denied the right to vote: individuals who were bankrupt, those who had no fixed domiciles, those who were receiving public relief, and the like; (2) holding special registration days immediately prior to the April elections to insure registration of all those newly eligible to vote; and (3) extension to some 4,000,000 repatriates of the franchise in national elections without reference to the normal six-months' residence requirements.

A comparison of eligible electors in the 1947 election for the House of Representatives indicates adequately the extent to which the revised legislation broadened the franchise:

Year	Men	Women	Total
1938	14,075,010	-	14,075,010
1942	14,594,287	-	14,594,287
1946	16,278,926	20,557,564	36,836,490
1947	19,569,839	21,326,483	40,896,322

Two basic factors influenced the exact timing of the general 1947 elections: the Constitution and the purge ordinances. In view of the desire of the Japanese Government to complete all elections prior to May 3rd, the date on which the new Constitution was to be promulgated, this became the limiting date for the termination of the elections.

Imperial Ordinance No. 1 of 1947, which applied the principles of the national purge to local public offices, was issued on January 4, 1947.3/ Soon thereafter the machinery for enforcement and the schedule of elections were prepared. Existing Japanese law precluded holding all elections at one time. Executives and legislators, for instance, must be elected on separate dates. In order to complete the governmental structure by May 3, at least four elections had to be held. On February 17 the Japanese Government announced the following election schedule:

April 5 - Elections for all executives, governors, mayors and village and town headmen.

3/ Appendix B: 5i, Imperial Ordinance No. 1 of 1947

April 15 - Run-off elections in the event that no candidate received the three-eights vote required for election, or in the event of a tie.

April 20 - Elections for the House of Counsillors, both those chosen from the prefectures and those elected at large.

April 25 - Elections for the House of Representatives.

April 30 - Elections for assemblymen of prefectures, cities, towns and villages.

~~With over~~ Since more than 209,000 elective offices were at stake, it had early become apparent that it would be impossible to screen all candidates prior to the election. A decision was thus reached to require that candidates for all offices but local assemblies receive clearance before filing their candidacy, but to permit candidates for local assemblies to run without final clearance but with the understanding that they would need to be fully cleared before they could accept office.

During the month prior to the election of local assemblymen, a total of 190,590 individuals were screened by the various public office qualifications examination committees: 5,345 for major election positions and 185,245 for minor. Preliminary screening for principal elective positions resulted as follows:

Number screened for House of Counsillors	1,406
Number barred	31
Number screened for House of Representatives	3,430
Number barred	138
Number screened for Prefectural Governor	466
Number barred	20
Number screened for Mayor of 5 principal cities	43
Number barred	1

Of the 185,245 individuals screened on the ~~minor~~ lower level, 483 were found unfit under the ordinances to hold public office.

The wide discrepancy between the number of individuals screened and the number actually found subject to the purge is an indication of the extent of self-elimination of possible candidates which took place before the campaign -- individuals filed who believed they could pass the screening.

2. Surveillance by Occupation Forces. The procedures of election surveillance used in the 1946 election having proved highly satisfactory, it was decided to adopt similar procedures for the 1947 elections. This called for assignment of responsibility for pre-election and post-election surveillance in each prefecture to the prefectural Military Government teams and for augmented surveillance on election day proper by roving teams comprised of representatives of both Military Government teams and tactical troops. Throughout the four campaigns and elections the senior Military Government officer in each prefecture assumed full responsibility for surveillance.

First steps toward preparations for surveillance of the 1947 elections on the local level were taken by SCAP in January, when approximately seventy-five officers representing Army, Corps, and regional Military Government headquarters, British Commonwealth Occupation Forces, corps and division G-2, and all prefectural Military Government teams attended a four-day conference at Government Section, General Headquarters. Officers who attended were those who were to be directly responsible for surveillance of the elections. Technical aspects of election laws and methods of surveillance and reporting were discussed and copies of a handbook containing principal election laws were distributed.

Subsequently, command instructions, directing the Commanding General of the Eighth Army to exercise surveillance over the April elections, were dispatched on January 28, 1947, (local elections) and February 21 (national

elections). These instructions were accompanied by three handbooks of election laws, which included annotated texts of all laws and ordinances pertinent to the national and local elections.

Continuous contact with Military Government teams was maintained by representatives of Government Section from the time of the January conference until the termination of the elections. Members of the Local Government Division of Government Section visited teams throughout Japan in the weeks before the first election, to insure that teams were familiar with election laws and ordinances and to insure uniform compliance throughout Japan with SCAP instructions on surveillance. In addition, on each election day, approximately twenty representatives from Government Section were assigned to assist Military Government teams on election surveillance. Thus, on each election day, SCAP representatives were stationed in the majority of the principal cities and prefectures throughout Japan to lend such technical assistance and advice as might be desired.

Throughout the election campaigns Government Section remained the principal point of contact with the central government in respect to election matters. Military Government teams had been authorized to report directly to SCAP any serious breaches in the election laws as well as any criticism of activities of Occupation personnel in connection with the elections. All reported breaches of the laws were called immediately to the attention of the Government. No criticism of the activities of Occupation personnel was received.

In addition candidates and parties were encouraged to hold as many campaign rallies as they desired. No prior notifications to Military Government were required for any such rallies and no restrictions were placed on election campaign speeches.

Regarding the technical aspects of actual surveillance, experience in the April 1946 election had indicated that surveillance team organization of one officer, one enlisted man, and one interpreter was eminently satisfactory. This pattern was, therefore, duplicated in the 1947 elections, with personnel again being drawn from Military Government teams, 8th Army tactical troops, FEAF units, British Commonwealth Occupation Forces, and the U. S. Navy Military Government component in Yokosuka.

Although prefectures varied considerably in size and population, the average prefecture had between 800 and 900 polling places, with about one to every four polling places designated as a ballot counting station. The optimum surveillance would have covered every polling station every election, but it was apparent from the outset that this would be impossible in view of the extreme isolation of many stations, the blanket of snow which throughout April made many towns and villages in Hokkaido, northern Honshu, and other mountainous areas inaccessible by jeep, and the large number of polling places situated on islands separated from the mainland by up to an eight-hour boat trip. Conditions naturally varied from prefecture to prefecture but the law of diminishing returns indicated that approximately 50 percent coverage of polling places throughout the country was about the most that could be expected at any election without assigning a considerable number of teams which at best could cover only two or three polling places. It was anticipated, however, that by varying assignments from election to election nearly every one of the 42,617 polling places throughout the country could be reached at least once during the course of the elections.

Three factors, however, combined to make election day surveillance in 1947 more difficult than in 1946; (1) doubling of the number of polling places;

(2) decrease in the number of Allied personnel available for surveillance duties; and (3) the great increase in the number of elections. The average number of polling places in 1947 totalled 42,617 as contrasted to 21,089 in 1946. In 1946, a total of five American divisions, in addition to the British Commonwealth Forces, were drawn upon for surveillance duties; in 1947, only four divisions, plus the BCOF, were available, the 2nd Marine Division having returned to the United States. Only one election had been held in 1946; four, and in some prefectures five, elections were held in 1947. Where it had been possible to spare large numbers of personnel for two or three days in 1946, an entirely different problem was created by the necessity of utilizing surveillance teams throughout most of the entire month of April 1947.

Despite these problems, however, average election surveillance in 1947 nearly doubled that of 1946 from the standpoint of the number of separate polling places visited. As opposed to coverage of approximately 12,000 out of 21,089 polling places in 1946, the totals in 1947 were as follows. Both years, of course, many of the stations listed were covered twice in each election and some three times.

Election	Average No. Polling Places	Number of Teams	No. Polling Places Surveyed	% Polling Places Surveyed
5 April	42,617	1,399	20,972	49.2
20 April	42,617	1,390	22,005	51.6
25 April	42,617	1,388	22,227	52.1
30 April	42,617	1,354	21,166	49.6

Several days prior to the election, team captains were briefed at Military Government headquarters and in turn they were responsible for briefing their own teams and for determining the order in which stations would be visited. Throughout the period of elections, surveillance teams remained in constant touch by telephone with election offices established in prefectural capitals

and were able to refer directly to the prefectural teams any problem arising from their surveillance activities.

3. Measures to Publicize the Elections. The manifold measures put into action in the Spring of 1947 to publicize the elections among the masses of the population are analyzed in detail in another section of this work.[1] Only the main lines of that wide publicity campaign to stimulate political interest on the part of the millions of the nation's electorate will be indicated here.

An intensive program of political education was launched by SCAP as early as February 1947. This program was designed to achieve the twin objectives of helping electors to cast their ballots intelligently and to stimulate participation by all eligible voters. More than clarifying campaign political issues and explaining election procedures, the objective was also to emphasize the responsibility of citizenship and the right to vote in a democratic society. Public meetings to afford candidates of all political persuasions an opportunity to discuss election issues in a free and unrestricted atmosphere were provided under this program. But in all cases, care was taken to avoid any suggestion of favoritism on the part of Occupation Forces, which throughout the elections maintained a strict neutrality concerning election issues or political personalities.

Government agencies made signal contributions to this program of public education. A series of posters, which were placed at all prominent public places throughout the country, were issued by the Home Ministry. These posters

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1* See section ~~on~~ VII "POLITICAL EDUCATION."

stressed graphically the voters' responsibility for independent and intelligent participation in the elections. The Ministry also issued a series of press releases, timed to precede each of the elections, containing detailed information relating to election procedures and administration, and with a special effort made to indicate to voters where they might have access to detailed information on all candidates. Under all conceivable aspects, the elections of 1947 were emphasized to the Japanese as the most significant in their history.

The Japanese press, radio, motion picture industry, and all other media of public information were utilized in this intensive electoral publicity campaign stressing the revolutionary nature of the elections and calling upon every Japanese citizen to cast his free and independent vote.

4. Political and Campaign Issues

a. Political Alignments Before Election. Since the election of 1946 the course of Japanese politics had been one of flexible character, reflecting an effort to meet the existing national emergency. The political parties were grouped as follows:

Conservative	Opposition
Liberal Party	Social Democratic Party
Progressive Party	Cooperative Democratic Party
	People's Party
	Communist Party

On March 31, 1947, the alignment of the parties changed with the merger of the Cooperative Democratic Party and People's Party, and the renaming of the Progressive Party as the Democratic Party with a change in its policies and platform. At the close of the 92nd Diet, therefore, the political parties were grouped as follows:

Conservative	Middle-of-the-road	Opposition	Extreme Left
Liberal	Democratic	Social Democratic People's Cooperative	Communist

The Diet strength of the parties had changed considerably with the Democratic Party holding the largest number of seats in the House of Representatives, due to the new members acquired at the expense of the Liberal Party, People's Cooperative Party, and the Independent Club. On the eve of the 1947 elections, the Diet representation of the major political parties was as follows:

Democratic Party	- 145
Liberal Party	- 140
Social Democratic Party	- 98
People's Cooperative Party	- 63
Communist Party	- 6

b. Party Platforms. A general classification of the platforms of the five political parties for overall policies may be made as follows:

Liberal Party	- Laissez-faire
Democratic Party	- Modified capitalism (meaning stringent government controls)
Social Democratic Party	- State control as a preliminary to government ownership (e.g. key industries, coal, iron, steel, fertilizer)
People's Cooperative Party	- Cooperative unionism
Communist Party	- People's control of Zaibatsu-owned enterprises and the key industries.

These programs may be summarized under the following headings:

Economy and Industry:

The Liberal Party advocated measures for increasing production through priority to key industries and participation in world trade relations. The Democratic Party also propounded the necessity for granting priorities, and in addition advocated strengthening of State control for the purpose of industrial reconstruction. The Social Democratic Party proposed state

management of key industries; the People's Cooperative Party advocated "cooperative unionism" (basic policies similar to the Social Democratic Party); and the Communist Party advocated state management and popular control of key industries.

Political:

All parties stressed the need for improving the existing administrative structure. The Liberal and Democratic Parties advocated reforms of the civil service and the local self-government system; the Social Democratic Party urged democratization by reforming the bureaucracy; the People's Cooperative Party called for improved local self-government and for the transfer of substantial responsibility for state affairs from the central to the local governments. The Communist Party advocated the overthrow of the Yoshida Cabinet, together with all reactionary and conservative influences.

Finance:

All political parties agreed on the need for effecting governmental controls. The Liberal Party advocated the adoption of a priority system for according loans to industries, the granting of free industrial loans, and reform of the taxation system. The Democratic Party held generally the same views and urged stabilization of national finance by enforcement of a fixed price system. The conservative parties opposed the Social Democratic Party's policy of suspending interest payment on war bonds. The latter party urged the nationalization of the Bank of Japan and the establishment of an Economic Rehabilitation Bank. The People's Cooperative Party agreed with the policies of the Social Democratic Party and

urged curtailment of administrative expenditures. The Communist Party advocated progressive taxes, repudiation of war bonds and the nationalisation of banking institutions with control by the people.

Agriculture:

All parties stressed the need for increasing food production and improving the rationing system. The Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party differed on the question of disposing of rice stocks in excess of rice quotas and the removal of official controls over perishables. The Liberals urged the elimination of all control regulations. The Social Democratic Party urged that decisions on quotas and the execution of rice deliveries be entrusted to representatives of the farmers. It also advocated rationing policies applying to foods and fuels, and continuance of official controls on perishables.

Labor:

On labor policies, all parties agreed to the need for close cooperation between capital and labor through participation of labor in management and the establishment of a minimum wage system and reforms to improve conditions of the workers. The Social Democratic Party urged the enlargement and sound development of labor organizations. The Liberal Party advocated enhancement of the laboring spirit, and the Democratic Party urged speeding up industrial rehabilitation with consequent benefit to the nation's workers.

c. Campaign Expenditures. The following limits per candidate were set by law on campaign expenditures for the April 1947 elections:

House of Councillors (national constituency)	-	¥ 75,000
House of Councillors (prefectural constituency)	-	50,000
House of Representatives	-	50,000
Governors of prefectures (depending on population)	-	25,000-50,000
Mayors of cities (depending on population)	-	5,000-20,000
Chiefs of Tokyo wards (depending on population)	-	5,000-20,000
Mayors of towns and villages	-	no provision
Prefectural assemblies	-	12,000
City and Tokyo ward assemblies	-	1,200
Town and village assemblies	-	No provision

Free post cards for use in election campaigns were distributed to candidates: 20,000 each to candidates for the House of Representatives and House of Councillors, national or prefectural constituency; and 10,000 for candidates for governor.

The following limitations were placed on the number of posters to be used in the campaign: 10,000 for candidates for the House of Councillors from the national constituency, with not more than 1,000 to be used in any single prefecture; 1,000 for candidates for the House of Councillors from prefectural constituencies, the House of Representatives, governors of prefectural and mayors of the five large cities; and 300 for members of prefectural and municipal assemblies and mayors of other cities.

5. General Analysis of the Elections.

a. Local Elections. On April 5, 1947, the Japanese electorate went to the polls to elect by direct popular vote the governors for the 46 prefectures, 209 mayors, and 10,210 chiefs of towns, villages and Tokyo wards. Hitherto city, town, and village heads had been elected indirectly through the local assemblies with subsequent approval by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and chiefs of Tokyo wards had been appointed by the Governor of Tokyo.

The number of persons who filed questionnaires advancing their candidacies for these offices reached a total of 47,594. However, as the

day of election approached this number dwindled to 20,594. Among these 20,594 contestants for the 10,419 mayoralty positions there were 14 women, of whom 3 were elected, -- the first women in Japanese history thus selected as local chief executives.

The Party affiliations of the new local executives were as follows:*

	Liberals	Democr.	Social Democr.	Cooper.	Commun.	Minor Parties	Independents	Total
City Mayors	19	23	11	1	--	9	146	209
Chiefs - Towns Villages and Tokyo Wards	360	316	253	63	11	96	9,111	10,210
	379	339	264	64	11	105	9,257	10,419

As percentages, the party affiliations of the new local executives is reflected as follows:

Liberals	Democr.	Social Democr.	Cooper.	Commun.	Minor Parties	Independents	Total
3.6	3.3	2.5	0.6	0.1	1.0	88.9	100

Thus nearly 90 percent of the mayors were non-party men. Actually, however, in many villages, towns and cities these independent candidates were endorsed or supported by political groups.

Two hundred and six candidates contested for the 46 governorships. In most prefectures the campaign was spirited. The party affiliations of the 206 candidates follow:

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* In 3,374 municipalities of Japan no elections took place because there was only one candidate in the field. This condition illustrates the fact of wide general agreement on the candidate before elections. It is further indicative of the persistence of historic patter in small rural communities.

	Liberals	Democr.	Social Democr.	Cooper.	Commun.	Minor Parties	Independents	Total
Candidates	14	10	33	6	9	20	114	206
Elected	4	4	4	0	0	8	21	46
% of Party Candidates who Succeeded	28.6	40.0	12.1	0	0	15.0	37.2	22.3

Again, as was true in the case of mayors, the phrase "independent" candidate did not mean that the candidate was not given some support by the parties. In almost all cases the independent candidates were accorded political party support.

Among the 206 candidates there were 32 former governors, of whom 26 were elected, including those who were victorious in the run-off elections. Of the six who were defeated, two were defeated by other former governors. Six other candidates were prominent government officials.

Run-off elections were necessary in eight prefectures, twenty cities, six Tokyo wards, and 312 towns and villages where no candidate received the required minimum 37 percent vote, as prescribed in the Law for the Organization of Urban and Rural Prefectures. Final contests were held on April 15.*

As was anticipated, smaller numbers of voters participated in the run-off elections: the average ranged from 6 to 20 percent fewer voters than there were on April 5. Yet the purpose of the elections was achieved: winning candidates were accorded a more extensive popular support.

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* In two prefectures, Nara and Miyazaki, one of the two candidates was purged just prior to the run-off elections. Because of the Imperial Ordinance concerning the purge which stated that if a candidate were purged the action was to be treated or considered as a withdrawal, the local government laws took effect. Hence no election was needed and the other candidate automatically became governor.

The vote received by the elected governors in the run-off elections was as follows:

Prefecture	Party Aff. of Candidate	Vote on April 5	Vote on April 15
Chiba	Liberal	198,399	284,321
Hokkaido	Soc. Democr.	384,830	555,862
Ibaragi	Independent	207,765	352,399
Kochi	Independent	89,159	171,876
Niigata	Independent	312,945	515,394
Wakayama	Liberal	98,350	219,318

Moreover, the experience of conducting run-off elections was informative and beneficial. This was the first time in Japan that such elections had been held.

Because of the deep public interest in the local assemblies, a precedent was established for Japan when 31,258,646, or 81.7 percent of the registered voters, turned out on April 30 to elect members of prefectural and local assemblies. This figure crowned that of the approximate 80 percent obtained under the Tojo elections in 1942, when the people were ordered to vote. In many prefectures more than 90 percent of the electors went to the polls. Women also established records. Voting for the second time in local elections, women turned out in unusually large numbers; 16,671,081 or 80 percent of registered women cast their ballots.

The municipal assembly elections were generally non-partisan. Most candidates for election to prefectural assemblies were also independents. The party vote in prefectural elections was as follows:

	Independent	Liberal	Democratic	Social Democratic	Cooperative	Communist	Minor Parties	Total
Votes	9,690,180	5,720,332	6,095,436	5,470,263	1,187,829	562,656	2,531,950	31,259,646
% of Total	31.0%	18.3	19.5	17.5	3.8	1.8	8.1	100

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The distribution of elected assemblymen by parties was as follows:

	Indep.	Liberal	Democr.	Soc.Dem.	Cooper.	Commun.	Minor Parties	Total
Prefectural	803	491	468	411	116	4	177	2,490
City Assemblies	4,917	856	647	672	32	36	312	7,272
Tokyo Ward Assem.	355	245	132	140	3	15	5	895
Village & Town Assemblies	167,924	3,956	4,124	4,701	577	365	1,577	183,224
Total	173,999	5,548	5,391	5,924	728	420	2,071	193,881

b. The National Elections. The elections for the House of Councillors and the House of Representatives, held on April 20 and 25 respectively, demonstrated an apparent paradox in the political thinking of the Japanese people. In the preceding elections for governors, mayors, and town and village chiefs a rather conservative trend misled some observers to predict a victory for either the Liberals or Democrats in the national elections as well. Such misconceptions arose from a lack of understanding of the superior importance in the eyes of the Japanese electorate of well-known personalities as opposed to political parties and principles. The average Japanese tended to vote for the prominent men in his local community, even though their views may not have coincided with his own.

This tendency persisted to a certain extent in the elections to the House of Councillors, since it was widely believed that the Upper House should preserve its traditional conservative character as opposed to the Lower House. This attitude accounts for the election of a large number of independents, most of whom were assumed to be conservatives. However, liberal influences did make a great deal more headway than in the local elections, and the Social Democrats emerged as the plurality party.

In the elections for the House of Representatives the voters showed

a surprising preference for parties as against personalities, and, as a result, very few independents or minor party candidates were elected. Again, it was the Social Democrats who gained a plurality in the Lower House, with not quite a third of the seats.

A major government reorganization required by the new Constitution was the creation of an elected Upper House in the Diet replacing the House of Peers. For the first time in Japanese parliamentary history the people assumed responsibility for selecting all national legislators. A law implementing this constitutional provision specified that 150 members of the House of Councillors were to be elected from prefectural constituencies and 100 from a national constituency, the entire nation comprising one electoral district for this latter election.[4] On April 20, therefore, each voter cast two votes, on separate ballots, one for a prefectural constituency candidate and one for a national constituency candidate. The term of office is six years, with half the members of the House being elected every three years. In this first election, however, the fifty percent of the candidates who polled the greatest number of votes in each of the prefectural and national constituencies qualified for six-year terms and the remaining fifty percent for three-year terms.

For the national constituency, official returns from the Home Ministry gave the total number of votes cast as 24,546,494, including 13,189,443 male voters and 11,357,051 women voters.

Independent candidates captured 45 percent of the seats in the House of Councillors, more than the total amount mustered by the Social Democrats, Liberals and Democrats, which constituted Japan's three major parties. The majority of the independents were of conservative leanings.

In the prefectural electoral group, conservatives also won an overwhelming majority over the "progressives." The conservatives numbered 64

4/ Appendix H: 3, "Law for the Election of Members of the House of Councillors; Law No. 11," February 24, 1947

percent of the successful candidates.

The number of women candidates standing for election to the House of Councillors totalled 19. In the national constituency, eight out of the thirteen candidates were elected; and two of the six in the prefectural constituencies were elected.

The following tabulation summarizes the results of the House of Councillors election:

	National Constituency	Prefectural Constituency	Total
Liberal Party	8	31	39
Democratic Party	6	24	30
Social Democratic Party	17	30	47
People's Cooperative Party	3	6	9
Communist Party	4	1	5
Minor Parties	5	5	10
Independents	57	53	110
Total	100	150	250

The following is a tabulation of votes cast for the various political parties and groups:

	Number of Votes	Percentage
Democratic Party	3,117,202	14
Liberal Party	3,823,767	17
Social Democratic Party	4,847,188	22
People's Cooperative Party	1,038,271	5
Communist Party	809,177	4
Minor Parties	1,036,176	5
Independents	7,235,693	33
Total	21,896,474	100

An analysis of the vocational grouping of the 250 successful candidates of the Upper House members was as follows: 52 industrialists were elected, 33 former members of the House of Peers, 24 Farmer's Association officials, and 22 teachers, 7 former Cabinet ministers, 3 ambassadors, 15 held other government positions. Labor leaders totalled 20, newspapermen 5, religious workers 8, writers 8, physicians 5, social workers 6, lawyers 7, businessmen 25.

Ten of the new Councillors were women, as has already been noted.

The election also created an Upper House of relatively young men. The average age of the Councillors was ten years lower than that of the members of former House of Peers.

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In the House of Representatives election on April 25 there were 1,573 candidates for the 466 seats, including 317 members of the expiring Diet, 24 members of previous Diets, and ~~77~~ 84 women. The number of candidates for each seat ranged from eight in the Tokyo Fourth District to 1.8 in the Fourth Fukuoka District.

Much greater interest was shown in the elections for the House of Representatives than for the House of Councillors. In this election, 67.9 percent of the registered voters participated. Out of a total registration of 19,569,839 men and 21,326,493 women, 14,658,264 men and 13,157,620 women voted. Invalid ballots amounted to 406,777, or less than 1.5 percent throughout the nation.

The election was highlighted by the emergence of the Social Democrats as the leading party in the Lower House, the party displacing the Liberals and showing a spectacular gain in strength, despite its failure to win even as much as one-third of the total number of seats. At the same time, a striking contrast was offered to the results of the House of Councillors elections in that minor parties and independents were unable to win more than a combined total of 11.6 percent of the popular vote and only 37 out of the 466 seats in the House. Although voters tended to vote for personalities rather than parties in the Upper House elections, they showed a decided preference for the major parties in the Lower House elections, with "new faces" winning 220 seats.

Another noteworthy result was the failure of women candidates to capture more than 15 seats, although the total number of candidates was nearly the same as for the 1946 elections, at which time 38 women were elected.

The Communists suffered a comparable setback, electing less than 1 percent of the House membership, although their popular vote was 3.7 percent and their vote-getting strength showed little change from the 1946 election results.

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The following is a tabulation of candidates for the House of Representatives:

	New Candidates	Incumbents	Former Diet Members	Total	Percentage
Democratic Party	239	83	9	331	21
Liberal Party	224	92	7	323	20
Social Democratic Party	198	86	3	282	18
Independent	249	5	3	257	17
Minor Parties	146	4	0	150	9
Communist Party	114	6	0	120	8
People's Cooperative Party	62	41	2	110	7
Total	1,232	317	24	1,573	100

Following is a tabulation indicating complete House of Representatives election results by parties:

	New	Re-elected	Former Diet Members	Total	Gain or Loss	Valid Votes	Percentage of Popular Votes
Social Democrats	69	71	3	143	+45	7,170,434	26.2
Liberals	60	71	1	132	- 8	7,260,377	26.5
Democrats	60	63	3	126	-19	7,097,208	25.9
People's Coop.	7	24	0	31	-32	1,940,105	7.1
Communists	2	2	0	4	- 2	996,507	3.6
Minor Parties	15	3	0	18	+14	1,562,213	5.7
Independents	8	4	0	12	+ 3	1,362,213	5.0
Total	221	238	7	446		27,389,107	100

In the key election areas, the Social Democrats captured 12 out of 27 seats in Tokyo Metropolitan District, compared to 8 for the Liberals, 4 for the Democrats, 2 for the Communists, and 1 for the People's Cooperatives. The two Communist leaders, Sanzo Nosaka and Kyuichi Tokuda, were placed last among the winners in their respective districts. In Osaka, the Social Democrats won 9 out of 19 seats, followed by 5 for the Democrats, 4 for the Liberals, and 1 Independent. Two Communists placed as runner-up in the First and Third

Districts of Osaka Prefecture. In Fukuoka, the Social Democrats secured 7 out of 19 seats, the Democrats 6, and the Liberals 3. In Hokkaido, the Social Democrats also won a plurality, with 8 out of the 22 seats, followed by 7 for the Liberals, 3 for the Democrats, 1 for the People's Cooperatives, and 3 for minor parties. In Hyogo, the Democrats captured half of the 20 seats, followed by 5 for the Social Democrats, 2 for the Liberals, and 1 for the People's Cooperatives. Of Aichi's 19 seats, 6 each went to the Democrats and Social Democrats, 4 to the Liberals, 2 to the People's Cooperatives, and 1 to a member of a minor party.

All eleven members of the Yoshida Cabinet who ran for re-election were elected. Three Ministers -- Justice Minister Tokutaro Kimura, Education Minister Seiichi Takahashi, and State Minister Tokujiro Kanamori -- did not run for election to either House of the Diet.

The new House of Representatives included two hundred and twenty-one "new faces", 238 former Diet members, and 7 former members. It contained the following vocational groupings: 14 members of agricultural associations, 16 teachers, 24 former government officials, 44 lawyers, 6 former Cabinet ministers, 19 labor leaders, 10 newspapermen, 6 religious workers, 23 writers, 3 physicians, and a large number of businessmen and industrialists.

6. A Note on the Participation of Women in the Election. The extension of suffrage rights to women before the general election for the House of Representatives in April 1946 inaugurated a year of unprecedented freedom which fostered the growth of political consciousness among Japanese women. Quantitative indices of political consciousness are reflected in the number of registered voters, the number of votes cast, the number of candidates for public office, and the number elected. The 1946 election disclosed the

existence of women's political interest and potentiality and the 1947 elections revealed increased political activity and acquisition of influence at all levels of government. Women took advantage of their first opportunity in history to participate as candidates and electors in the elections for the House of Councillors and for local legislative bodies and executive posts.

Women ran for and were elected to legislative posts at all levels of government. No women were elected governor of a prefecture, mayor of a city, or chief of a town, but three women were elected as village chiefs.

In the national arena, ten women were elected to the House of Councillors. However, in the House of Representatives election of 1947, the only 1947 election directly comparable to the 1946 election, the number of women elected to the Lower House showed a considerable decrease. In 1946, 38 out of 79 candidates were elected, whereas in 1947 only 15 out of 34 candidates were successful. Twelve of those elected were former Diet members.

The political potential of women as revealed by an analysis of the 1946 and 1947 elections is not only amazingly in excess of expectations, but in excess of reasonable hope and portends well for the future of Japan.

Granted that their interest far exceeds their demonstrated capacity, it is nevertheless a warranted presumption that a continuation of their present interest in conjunction with further emancipation from stultifying social mores, extension of educational opportunities, and exposure to theoretical and practical political considerations will undoubtedly facilitate the development of democracy in Japan.

7. Election Violations. According to information released by the Home Ministry on June 20, 1947, some 3,091 cases involving 8,532 individuals were being investigated by the Public Procurator's Offices in connection with suspected election offenses. Of this number, 2,997 persons had been indicted by

June 10, while 2,246 were cleared.

The final report of the 1946 Diet election disclosed that 5,432 cases of violations had been referred to the Procurator's Offices. This covered one election only, whereas the 3,091 cases in 1947 included the results of four elections.

Of the 2,297 indicted as of June 10, 1947, fifty received sentences of hard labor, 21 were given lighter jail sentences, 1,028 were fined, while 1,905 still awaited trial as of that date. One person only, in Fukushima, was acquitted while two were convicted but had their sentences remitted. In ten instances both fines and imprisonment were imposed.

In 1946, 128 received sentences to hard labor, 63 lighter sentences, 1,822 paid fines, and 7 were acquitted.

By far the greatest number of election offenses in 1947 involved bribery, solicitation of bribes or the delivery of scarce articles in lieu of cash. These numbered 972, involving 5,461 individuals. The next greatest number of offenses were house to house canvassing, which accounted for 755 cases and 1,061 individuals, and violation of poster regulations, 764 cases and 888 individuals.

Arranged by parties to which the 8,532 suspected offenders were alleged to belong, statistics indicated that 804 Liberals were accused, 728 Democrats, 533 Social Democrats, 86 People's Cooperatives, and 75 Communists. A further 183 belonged to minor parties, while 5,031 were Independents. More than two-thirds of the charges against these persons dealt with bribery in one form or another.

In this connection, it must be pointed out that Japanese election laws are far more detailed and stringent than are those of most democratic nations

and therefore many acts are subject to prosecution in Japan which might be regarded as wholly permissible in election campaigns in other countries. Thus, payment for the services of legitimate campaign workers, house-to-house canvassing for specific candidates, posting too many placards, or using posters of other than standard size, are considered "crimes" under the Japanese election laws.

8. Abstention from Voting. The abstention rate of voters in the election of 1946 had been 27.9 percent. Although actually only the House of Representatives election could be compared with the 1946 figures it had been hoped that each of the 1947 elections would see an abstention rate of less than the previous year. In actuality, however, only one election showed a lower rate than that of 1946:

Election	Date	Rate of Abstention
Local Executives	5 April	27.9 percent
House of Councillors	20 April	40.8 "
House of Representatives	25 April	32.1 "
Local Assemblies	30 April	18.3 "

In considering the average abstention rate of 30 percent for the 1947 elections, it must be recalled that essentially this represents a percentage of total eligible voters and not a percentage of a total of registered voters, which in turn is only a percentage of the total of eligible voters. Japanese law provides basically for automatic registration; once each year all eligible voters are registered regardless of whether they have any interest in voting or not. In most Western countries, of course, the situation is reversed; registration is not automatic but requires that the voter take the initiative and register himself. From the standpoint of the percentage of all adults actually participating in an election, therefore, a 70 percent turnout in a Japanese election would be equivalent of about an 85 percent turnout in an

average American election.

The basic reasons for abstention in 1947 were apparently the number of elections in rapid succession held within the brief span of a month, the severe restraints placed on campaigning because of the lack of paper, and the novelty and complexity of such elections as required the casting of separate ballots.

In view of the varying terms of the offices included, such a series of elections as was held in 1947 could not again be held until 1959, -- and even juxtaposition in 1959 would require that during the intervening years no general election for the National Diet be held except at the end of a four-year term.

9. Statement by the Supreme Commander. The democratic response of the people of Japan to the opportunities afforded them in the elections of 1947 for an unprecedentedly full exercise of the franchise and for the establishment of both national and local governments according with the freely expressed will of the electorate was hailed by the Supreme Commander in the following statement issued on April 27th:

> "With the recently held series of elections, the last preparatory step necessary for the inauguration of the new Japanese Constitution has been accomplished. This Constitution is among the most liberal and progressive national charters in the world. It reflects one of the great spiritual reformations of mankind. Its effectuation marks a new era in the Far East which may well prove vital to the future of civilization. It gives the Japanese people another chance. It raises the masses of them from the totalitarianism of practical slavery to the dignity of free men. I have faith they will not fail their new obligation.

"That faith is justified by the elections just past. From factories and shops and homes, from villages and farms and mines, the Japanese people streamed by the millions throughout the land to the polling places to discharge their new responsibilities of citizenship. There they voted for the candidates of their choice, freely and fearlessly, without disorder and according to the rules as they understood them. In this atmosphere of freedom, marked by serious effort and honesty of purpose, no one can justly criticize their choice. This choice, for the first time in Japanese history, reflected the free will of the majority, as against the totalitarian dictates of a minority. This is democracy!

"The basic issue before the electorate was a selection between political philosophies. That of the totalitarian extreme right had already been discredited and rejected for its responsibility for war and defeat and long suppression of the rights and liberties of the masses. On the other hand, that of the extreme left, the communistic philosophy, was still in issue, with its leaders strongly bidding for the popular support. Since the inception of the occupation, when thousands of its adherents were freed from the stern suppression of prison cells, this philosophy and its leaders had been given the fullest liberty and freedom of political action in open and fair competition with democratic forces and beliefs. It thus had its full chance and on the merits has failed. The Japanese people have firmly and decisively rejected its leadership and overwhelmingly have chosen a moderate course, sufficiently centered from either extreme to insure the preservation of freedom and the enhancement of individual dignity."