

Shifting Japanese Party Politics after the End of the 1955 System

— An Analysis of What Some Aggregate Data Indicate —

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Since the last general election held in 2003, not a few journalists and columnists have mentioned “the era of a two-party system in Japan”. Some researchers hastily asserts that the old 1955 system has been finally replaced by a new system called 2003 system. According to such an argument, the upheaval of Japanese party politics since 1993 has been finally settled down, replaced by a new system. In this so-called 2003 system, the LDP, the Liberal Democratic Party is tend to be seen as still leading, but it is not so powerful as it was before 1993. What is following after the LDP is the DPJ, Democratic Party of Japan. The DPJ is still vulnerable on many aspects, but the newly introduced election system that has a strong tendency to produce a two-party system will not fail to bring the DPJ to the position of the LDP’s junior partner, they say. Does such an argument depict the real shift in Japanese party politics? If so, is it a genuine two-party system? Or is it a disguised dominant party system with the predominant LDP that survived the upheaval since 1993? The purpose of this small article is to answer such questions using aggregate data.

1. The End of the 1955 System

Before talking about whether we are really having a new party system, however, I would like to look back at the demise of the so-called 1955 system. Needless to say, Japan was once regarded as prime example of a dominant party system, or a “special brand of dominant party pluralism,¹⁾” as its dominant party, the LDP continued to monopolize

power for thirty-eight years from 1955 through 1993. It is natural, therefore, that enormous energy has been consumed to understand the power shift in 1993 and the following development of Japanese politics. The books that I am trying to review here are the two of the most excellent works that tackle this difficult task.

Generally speaking, the numerous attempts to explain the upheaval of Japanese politics in and after 1993 can be classified into three groups. The first group consists of those who focus on microscopic factors such as the aspirations, tactics, and strategies taken by political actors. Most journalistic explanations fall into this category. Needless to say, many political scientists have also analyzed events in this manner. Among these, a research group led by Sasaki provides comprehensive information and various analyses about “political reform” from 1988 through 1994 (1999)². Their aim is to describe and explain the whole process of the fierce political battle in detail. Curtis’s analysis in this line gives us an compelling explanation of the metamorphosis of Japanese party politics in those days³. On the other hand, there are some who try to analyze events exclusively from specific point of views. Christensen, for example, see the formation of the non-LDP government in 1993 as the first successful case of coalition politics pursued by opposition parties since the establishment of the LDP in 1955⁴. Kohno explains the defection of politicians from the LDP in 1993 by focusing on the incentives of politicians and the constraints surrounding them⁵. According to Kohno, or the rational-choice theorists in general, politicians are always preoccupied by their own reelection, and rationally calculate which alternative will be most effec-

1) Michio Muramatsu and Ellis S. Krauss, “The Dominant Party and Social Coalitions in Japan.” in T. J. Pempel ed., *The One-Party Dominant Regimes*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990, p. 304.

2) Sasaki Takeshi ed., *Seiji Kaikaku Sen-happyaku-nichi no Sinjitsu* (Examining Political Reform Argued for 1,800 days and its Effects on Japanese Politics). Tokyo: Koudan-sha, 1999.

3) Gerald Curtis, *The Logic of Japanese Politics : Leaders, Institutions, and the Limits of Change*. New York : Columbia University Press, 1999.

4) Ray Christensen, *Ending the LDP Hegemony : Party Cooperation in Japan*. Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 2000.

5) Masaru Kohno, *Japan’s Postwar Party Politics*, ch. 8. Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1997.

tive to that end.

Secondly, there are those who try to explain political events in terms of broad contextual factors that affected the whole political system of the nation. Among these factors are socio-economic structures, big waves in international politics, and ideological trends. T. J. Pempel, for example, sees the splitting of the LDP, the introduction of a new electoral system, and other unexpected political changes in the 1990s, as well as the so-called bubble-burst and the poor performance of the Japanese economy in the same decade, as the result of a "regime" transformation⁶⁾. Then Ohtake explains the chaotic situation after 1993 by analyzing a tidal change of the ideological environment⁷⁾.

The context of international politics in which the Japanese political system is put is also seen as important. Sasaki also points in the introduction to his book to the ending of the cold war which forced Japanese politicians to realize the ineffectiveness of the existing political framework, and made them decide to sail on the rough sea of "political reform"⁸⁾. Stockwin thinks of the Gulf Crisis that quickly followed the ending of the Cold War as the starting point of the breakdown of the LDP's one-party dominance⁹⁾.

In the third group are those who attribute 1993 to voting behavior and the political attitude of the Japanese electorate. There are few studies in this group, however, that explain the ending of the Japanese dominant party system because the collapse of the LDP administration in 1993 was not caused as the result of a general election, but by the splitting of the LDP. However, it is undeniable that politicians' concern about voters' opinion has some, if not exclusive, effects on their strategies and tactics. In this sense, it may be arguable that voters' political attitudes indirectly attributed to the collapse of the one-party dominant system. Research

6) T. J. Pempel, *Regime Shift : Comparative Dynamics of the Japanese Political Economy*. Ithaca, NY : Cornell University Press, 1998.

7) Hideo Ohtake, *Nippon Seiji no Tairitsu Jiku : 93-nen Iko no Seihen no Naka de* (The Axis of Conflict in Japanese Politics : Political Realignment since 1993). Tokyo : Chuo Koron-sha, 1999.

8) Sasaki, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-9.

9) J. A. A. Stockwin, *Governing Japan*, third edition, p. 77. Oxford, UK : Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1999.

done by Tanaka and by Kabashima suggests the possible fruitfulness of such an approach¹⁰⁾.

2. A New Party System in Japan ?

Whatever the explanation of it you may provide, one thing is certain : The 1955 system has passed away forever. My task here is to try to answer the question of what kind of party system is replacing the old one. Has the new system really been crystallized ? Or the environment of political parties is still fluid ? In order to answer this question, I would like to derive three possible explanations from Table 1 and Table 2, and examine which of three is most suitable to depict the present situation. Table 1 and 2 show the effective and actual numbers of parties at three different times, and each party's share of PR vote in the last three general elections.

The first possibility Table 1 and Table 2 suggest us is that some kind of multi-party system will still be able to survive, all the more so because the present electoral system has a PR tier. The effective number of parties is still a bit too large to discuss the advent of a two-party system. Besides, the seat-share distribution shown on Table 1 and Table 2 resembles to that of today's Germany. Of course, this represents each party's force only in the PR tier. In the SMD tier, the reality is much harsher to

Table 1 Transition of the Number of Parties as Parliamentary Caucuses ("Kaiha")*

	Oct. 15, 1997	Aug. 15, 2000	Dec. 20, 2003
Actual N	8	9	5
Effective N	2.98	3.15	2.40

*Calculated by each kaiha's share of seats.

10) Aiji Tanaka, "Kokumin Ishiki ni okeru Gojugonen Taisei no Henyo to Hokai," (The Transformation and Collapse of the 1955 System in Voters' Minds). In *Gojugonen Taisei no Hokai* (The End of the 1955 System), ed. The Japanese Political Science Association. Tokyo : Iwanami Shoten.

Table 2 Share of Votes in the Nationwide PR Tier (%)

	1996	2000	2003
LDP	32.76	28.31	34.95
NFP	28.04	—	—
DPJ	16.10	25.18	37.38
CGP	—	12.97	14.77
JCP	13.06	11.23	7.75
SDP	6.38	9.36	5.12
NHP	1.05	—	—
LIB	—	11.01	—
CON	—	0.41	—*

*The Conservative Party ran no candidate in the PR blocks.

small parties. In the last election, the JCP won no seat on the district level. The SDP gained only one. Thus, the multi-party scenario does not look very promising. But I do not completely exclude this possibility right away.

The second possibility is that Japan is adopting a two-party system. Such a view is found in many articles and columns. It is true that the present electoral system was introduced to create a policy-centered two-party system. Parties, politicians, and voters were long expected to learn how to adapt to the new electoral system. The advocates of the new electoral system must be strongly motivated to seek for the evidence that their dream has come true. Actually, Table 1 shows that both the actual and effective number of parties sharply declined in 2003. The Democrats now have thirty-seven per cent of seats in the House of Representatives, surpassing the LDP in PR. It is the largest share that a party other than the LDP has ever achieved since 1955. On the other hand, two tiny conservative parties disappeared. Two left-wing parties survived the election anyway, but underwent a serious setback. Thus, it is possible to say that Japan has now a two-party system in a broad sense, if not a pure

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The third possibility is that another dominant-party or dominant coalition system is appearing, with the LDP, or the LDP-CGP coalition that is overwhelming even the DPJ. The CGP, the Clean Government Party, is by far smaller than the two major parties, even if it can sway a casting-vote occasionally. Some may argue, however, that the party is inseparably tied up with the LDP today. The CGP needs to stay allied with the LDP for a certain religious reason, or sectarian interest that political scientists seldom mention. The LDP, on the other hand, desperately needs the CGP to keep itself above water in metropolitan areas and in some urban areas. It is arguable, therefore, that the LDP-CGP coalition is not a temporary cooperation but a consolidated entity. If so, the LDP and the CGP combined will continue to secure seats well over the majority in the Diet, establishing a new version of the 1955 system.

Needless to say, a party system is affected, or even molded to some extent, by the electoral system of the country. According to the Duverger's law, an SMD system leads to a two-party system. As Duverger himself says, the law does not instantly produce a nationwide two-party system. It is primarily in each district that the law becomes effective in shaping the pattern of electoral competition. Of course, he predicts that the individual district's tendency toward a two-party competition will be finally accumulated into a nationwide two-party system. But fact is that an SMD system also can lead to a dominant party system on the district level as once observed in the South of the United States. In Britain, many districts have been in such one-party dominant situation, too. There is one more thing that we should take into account when we talk about the Duverger's law. In Britain, a country of the genuine SMD system, a third party has continuously participated in elections on the nationwide basis since early in the last century. Moreover, the present third party, the Liberal Democratic Party, has gradually increased in its nationwide share of vote since 1952. In the previous general election held in May, 2005, it obtained twenty-two percent of the votes cast, and gained 62 seats in the House of Commons. We should stay cautious about the impact of electoral system on party configurations. I would like to, therefore, investigate into how parties do compete with each other in their district.

Table 3a Close-Race Index of Each Election : Runner-Ups Against Winners

Class	1996	2000	2003
$0 \leq C < 20$	1.33	1.33	1.00
$20 \leq C < 40$	8.33	11.00	7.67
$40 \leq C < 60$	15.67	21.33	16.67
$60 \leq C < 80$	30.33	27.33	28.67
$80 \leq C < 100$	44.33	39.00	46.00
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Average	72.60	68.74	72.74
Districts	300	300	300

$$\text{Index CR} = \frac{\text{Runner-Up's Votes}}{\text{Winner's Votes}} (\%)$$

Table 3a indicates the transition of overall competition on the district level. Here, I use Close-Race Index (Index CR) to measure how fierce or relaxed the contest was in a given district. The index is the same as “Sekihai-ritsu,” or Best-Loser Index. Using this term, I would like to pay more attention to the intensity of competition in a district than to the fate of losers. These tables indicate the degree of how hard winners and runner-ups competed in elections. According to the table, the intensity of the contests between top-two candidates was mitigated a little in 2000. This means that there were more winners who won easier victories in 2000 than in other elections. In 2000, the opposition camp did not fully recover from the damage caused by the break-up of the NFP, New Frontier Party. Some LDP candidates were able to enjoy effortless games due to their rivals’ blunders. By 2003, however, the DPJ seems to have successfully filled the vacuum left by the disbanded NFP.

Except the minor decrease in the number of highly competitive districts in 2000, the rivalry between top-two candidates shows no significant change over the elections. In contrast to this stability, we can see a linear change in Table 3b that shows the competitiveness between winners and third-place candidates. In 1996, many third-place candidates were strong

Table 3b Close-Race Index of Each Election : Third-Place Candidates Against Winners

Class	1996	2000	2003
$0 \leq C < 20$	29.05	32.77	65.76
$20 \leq C < 40$	31.42	39.53	25.76
$40 \leq C < 60$	22.64	18.24	5.76
$60 \leq C < 80$	13.18	7.43	2.03
$80 \leq C < 100$	3.72	2.03	0.68
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Average	36.52	31.53	20.59
Districts	296	296	295

$$\text{Index CT} = \frac{\text{Third-Place-Candidate's Votes}}{\text{Winner's Votes}} (\%)$$

enough to obtain decent amount of votes. Some third-runners even played very close games with top-two candidates. In Tokyo 21st district where a DPJ candidate snatched victory, candidates fielded by the LDP and the NFP obtained more than eighty per cent of the vote won by the winner. In this district, even the fourth-place candidate for the JCP, Japan Communist Party, obtained more than seventy per cent of winner's vote. In 1996, there are 23 districts with confused three-way or four-way fights.

But the number of districts with such super-competitive situation decreased rapidly in one election after another. In 2003, 90% of third-place candidates obtained less than 40% of winners' vote. The average share of vote of third runners also fell to 20.6% in 2003 from 36.5% in 1996. It is obvious that substantial contest is taken place only between top two candidates in most districts today. At the district level, the tendency toward the two-party situation looks to be dominant.

Does such situation at the district level bring about paralleling phenomenon nationwide? Table 4 will give an answer to this question. What is most conspicuous on the table is JCP's overwhelming share among third-place candidates. But this is quite predictable. The point here is that

Table 4 Party Labels of Those Candidates Who Finished Third Place

	1996	2000	2003
LDP	20	4	3
NFP	20	—	—
DPJ	56	24	12
SDP	13	30	22
CGP	—	3	0
JCP	163	198	229
NJSP	7	1	—
LIB	—	11	—
CON	—	1	3
Others	7	15	3
Independents	10	9	23
Total	296	296	295

about one third of candidates who finished third place in 1996 were of the largest three parties. Besides, as mentioned before, there were some communists who finished third place but still pushed the winners very hard. In contrast to 1996, there were only fifteen candidates from either the LDP or the DPJ who finished third place. The third place status looks to be almost exclusively assigned to the JCP, the staggering SDP, the Social Democratic Party, and some independents or non-partisan candidates. This means that participation in the actual competition in most districts was restricted to the LDP and the DPJ candidates in the last election.

Table 3a, Table 3b, and Table 4 combined tell us that the last general election in 2003 brought to Japan de fact nationwide two-party competition at least at the district level. The next question to be asked here is whether the seat in each district was fought for by equally promising contenders of the two major parties. If not, Japan may revive a dominant-party system.

Table 5a Close-Race Index of LDP Winners

Class	1996	2000	2003
$0 \leq C < 20$	2.37	2.26	1.14
$20 \leq C < 40$	13.02	16.38	11.36
$40 \leq C < 60$	16.57	28.81	22.16
$60 \leq C < 80$	26.63	27.68	28.41
$80 \leq C < 100$	41.42	24.86	36.93
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Average	69.40	61.28	67.86
Winners	169	177	176

$C = \text{Runner-Up's Votes} / \text{Winner's Votes} \times 100$

Table 5b Close-Race Index of Winners from the Largest Opposition Parties

Class	1996	2000	2003
	NFP	DPJ	DPJ
$0 \leq C < 20$	0.00	0.00	0.93
$20 \leq C < 40$	1.06	0.00	1.87
$40 \leq C < 60$	11.70	10.00	9.35
$60 \leq C < 80$	34.04	30.00	29.91
$80 \leq C < 100$	53.19	60.00	57.94
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Average	78.60	81.18	79.6
Winners	94	80	107

$C = \text{Runner-Up's Votes} / \text{Winner's Votes} \times 100$

Table 5a and Table 5b indicate the competitive strength of LDP winners and that of NFP/DPJ winners respectively. These two tables tell us that LDP winners tend to win easier victories than NFP/DPJ winners. This means candidates for second largest parties are more vulnerable

than those for the LDP. On the other hand, Table 6 shows the number of "safe seats" where winners won easy victory. In these safe-seat districts, runner-ups were able to garner less than sixty per cent votes of those won by the winners. When Close-Race Index is smaller than 60 in a district, there is few opportunity for the runner-up to be resurrected in the PR tier. Apparently, the LDP is bestowed much more such safe seats than its rivals. As I wrote before, the LDP enjoyed easier victory than usual in the 2000 general election. Some of NFP's safe seats in 1996 were confiscated by the LDP later, as their owners rejoined the party. So it is reasonable to say that the LDP has around 60 safe seats, and that the DPJ has about 10. In these safe-seat districts, one-party dominance has been maintained, or revived. In this way, the LDP is much privileged than the other parties. It is not easy, therefore, for the DPJ, or any other parties, to outnumber the LDP at the SMD level, especially in many of rural areas.

But we can find some hopeful signs for the DPJ when we carefully read the result of the last general election held in 2003. Table 6 shows the gain and loss of each party. The DPJ lost 13 seats to the LDP. But the DPJ deprived 30 seats of the LDP. What is especially notable in this respect is that 14 of these 30 DPJ triumphs were won by "freshmen." Another DPJ freshman defeated a conservative non-partisan incumbent, too. DPJ's

Table 6 Number of Districts Where Winners Won Easy Victories (C<60)

	1996	2000	2003
Total	76	101	76
LDP	54	85	63
NFP	12	—	—
DPJ	3	8	13
SDP	2	0	0
CGP	—	1	0
LIB	—	1	—
CON	—	4	0
Indepen	5	2	0

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former incumbents did good job, too. Thus, the party overrode the LDP dominance in Niigata, Chiba, Shiga, and Kyoto. Except Kyoto, these prefectures were LDP's bastions after the second World War. Even Kyoto was ruled by the LDP for long after the demise of communist dominance.

By the way, I exclude any "Nisei" candidate, that is, a candidate who succeeds his/her ex-incumbent father or relative, from the category of "freshman" in Table 7¹¹⁾. Table 8 gives us the information about Nisei freshmen, suggesting that one of LDP's recruiting pools of promising candidates is now becoming less reliable to the party. Among LDP Nisei freshmen, the result was a tie. In rural areas, Nisei candidates can still "inherit" most part of their fathers' solid support basis. Needless to say, such advantage is another expression of incumbent's advantage. But incumbent advantage itself is diminishing in metropolitan areas, and in some urban areas. So is Nisei advantage in those areas. Actually, most of LDP Nisei candidates were defeated in urbanized areas. The present electoral system makes metropolitan and urban areas better represented than the old system did¹²⁾. The declining Nisei advantage will encourage some freshmen for the DPJ. We can see such rosy situation for the DPJ even in some LDP dominant regions like Okayama.

In 1996, Okayama prefecture with five single-member districts was overwhelmingly dominated by the LDP. The LDP won quite easy victories in all the districts. But its strength has been proved to be unstable : the shadow of the DPJ has creeping closer and closer to local LDP politicians. Table 9a and Table 9b exemplify DPJ's advance in Okayama

11) Ishibashi and Reed provided us with an excellent analysis of the Nisei phenomenon under the 1955 system. Michihiro Ishibashi and Steven Reed, "Second-Generation Diet Members and Democracy in Japan". *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXII, No. 4, 1992. As for the rise and fall of Nisei politicians, see also Asahi Shimbun Tokubetsu Shuzai Han, "Seijika yo" (On Today's Politicians in the World), p. 39. Tokyo : Asahi Shimbun-sha, 2000.

12) Fukashi Horie, "Shin-senkyo Seido no Ito to Seika" (Aims and the Effects of New Election System in Japan), paper presented to the annual conference of the Japan Election Studies Association, 1977, pp. 4-5. As for the over representation of rural elements on many aspects under the 1955 system, see also. Taku Sugawara, "Nippon Seiji ni okeru Nousei Baiasu" (Overwhelming Influence of Rural Elements over Japanese Politics under the 1955 System). *Nippon Seiji Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2004.

Table 7 Number of Districts that Changed Their Winning Parties
— As the Result of the 2003 General Election —

From DPJ to LDP : 13 <Category of Winners> Freshman : 4 Incumbent in the PR tier : 2 Former incumbent : 7
From DPJ to CGP : 1 <Category of Winners> Incumbent in the PR tier : 1
From LDP to DPJ : 30 <Category of Winners> Freshman : 14 Incumbent in the PR tier : 2 Former incumbent : 14
From SDP to DPJ : 1 <Category of Winners>1 Incumbent in the PR tier : 1
From an independent group to DPJ : 1 <Category of Winners> Freshman : 1

Table 8 The Standings of “Nisei” Freshmen*

	N of freshman	Won	Lost
LDP	18	9	9**
DPJ	4	1	3

* Only those who ran in the same districts as their fathers' or relatives'.

**Two of them were resurrected in the PR tier.

Table 9a DPJ's Advance in Okayama Prefecture : Votes gained by each candidate in the Okayama 2nd district

1996		2000		2003	
Kumashiro (LDP)	88,569 (54.8%)	Kumashiro (LDP)	85,514 (51.3%)	Kumashiro (LDP)	78,643 (48.5%)
Nakagiri (DPJ)	51,551 (31.9%)	Nakagiri (DPJ)	59,634 (30.1%)	Tsumura (DPJ)	69,190 (42.7%)
Ozaki (JCP)	21,432 (13.3%)	Ozaki (JCP)	20,500 (12.3%)	Ozaki (JCP)	14,357 (8.9%)
		Matsumoto (SDP)	10,743 (6.3%)		

Table 9b DPJ's Advance in Okayama Prefecture : Votes gained by each candidate in the Okayama 4th district

1996		2000		2003	
Hashimoto (LDP)	152,595 (68.0%)	Hashimoto (LDP)	128,888 (65.6%)	Hashimoto (LDP)	104,653 (56.5%)
Kato (NFP)	56,646 (25.8%)	Kumagaya (DPJ)	46,484 (23.7%)	Yunoki (DPJ)	66,199 (35.7%)
Kakiuchi (JCP)	15,173 (6.8%)	Akasaka (JCP)	21,091 (6.1%)	Higashi (JCP)	14,367 (7.8%)

in the last decades. In the district 2, the incumbent LDP politician, Kumashiro, lost votes by election by election, and was pressed hard on the corner by a very young freshman for the DPJ, Tsumura, who was resurrected on the PR tier and has been favorably selling himself to voters as the other incumbent of the district since his resurrection. In the district 4, ex-prime minister Hashimoto lost votes election by election, too. The experience of Okayama tells that the strength of the LDP in rural area is not as entrenched as at a glance. In fact, Okayama LDP was lost by the DPJ by a large margin in the last Upper House election held in 2004.

The number of resurrected runner-ups can be another asset for the DPJ (see Table 10). As well known, the present electoral system allows dual candidacy. Among candidates equally ranked on the PR list of a party, better losers are resurrected in PR. No parties, however, seriously considered the potential of the resurrection system in the first two elections

Table 10 Number of "Resurrected" Losers

	1996	2000	2003
Total	85 (/200)	49 (/180)	112 (/180)
LDP	35 (/70)	3 (/56)	38 (/69)
NFP	0 (/60)	—	—
DPJ	24 (/35)	28 (/47)	71 (/72)
SDP	10 (/11)	13 (/15)	3 (/5)
CGP	—	1 (/24)	0 (/25)
JCP	16 (/24)	0 (/20)	0 (/9)
LIB	—	5 (/18)	—

*Parentheses indicate the entire number of PR winners in each category.

partly because PR seats have been regarded as second-class games by many politicians. It is the DPJ in the last general election that made full use of the resurrection clause of the law to strengthen the party as much as possible. Of 72 DPJ's PR winners, 71 were resurrected representatives. This means that the DPJ placed very strong challengers in 71 districts where LDP enjoyed victories in the last election. Moreover, many of those resurrected incumbents are literally freshmen. They not only had their first experience of campaigning in the last election, but ran almost from scratch. That is, they were genuine new comers to politics. Seeing their fortune, more people may consider career change to run for the DPJ seriously.

Conclusion

The impetus toward a change of Japanese party system has not entirely come from the introduction of the first-past-the-post election system, that is, SMD system. For one thing, LDP's long rival SDP, the former JSP, was self-destructive late in the 20th century, almost spontaneously offering its traditional strongholds to other parties such as the DPJ. What was the last straw that broke the camel's back was its serious blunder over its commitment to the North Korea. This blunder severely damaged its

fortune. Even former chairperson Doi who used to be very popular among voters in her conservative district was defeated in the last general election by her LDP challenger who attacked her fiercely on SDP's strong tie with North Korea (see Table 11). The sea change of international environment affected domestic politics as Stockwin says. Voters' minds themselves have changed from what they used to be in the 1955 system era as Tanaka points out. Seemingly, the LDP has been able to adapt such new circumstance very well, regaining its old bastions that it once lost. It is not surprising, therefore, some researchers and journalists look at the looming 2003 system as another dominant party system with the LDP as the permanent leading party.

Putting together those potential advantages of the DPJ mentioned above, however, I would rather like to say that the chance for a two-party system, exactly speaking, two-party dominant system mixed with a limited multi-party feature, will be larger than that of a simple dominant-party system in the near future. Of course, it is another question whether this competition pattern will become structured soon to institutionalize a two-party system or not. But voters themselves are accepting the notion of a two-party system, if it is not a genuine one. As Reed says, "sooner or later, the electorate will be ready for a change, and "kick the rascals out". When that happens, the only alternative rascals will be the Democrats and Japan will have, for better or worse, a two-party system"¹³⁾.

Table 11 Doi and Her Party in the Hyogo 7th District (%)

	Doi's Share of Votes	SPD in the PR Tier	SPD in the Nationwide PR Tier
96HR	46.6	32.2	6.4
00HR	62.8	20.3	9.4
03HR	40.8	10.2	5.1

13) Steven Reed, "Evaluating Political Reform in Japan : A Midterm Report". *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 3, Part 2, 2002, p. 261.

Note

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