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Japan Screen Topics

ISSUE No. 76-12

JAPAN GOES TO THE POLLS

167 feet 4 min. 38 sec.

1. (MR. FUKUDA) Japan holds one of her most important general elections since World War II, with 511 seats in the House of Representatives, one of the two houses of the Diet, at stake.

Premier Takeo Miki and Former Vice Premier Takeo Fukuda, appeal for votes for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

But five opposition parties also are in the race. Their leaders, including Communist Party Chairman Kenji Miyamoto, campaign vigorously.

2. (HALL) Candidates use every device to get their message to voters. This Socialist party speaker's oration is relayed by sign language to deaf mutes in the audience.

3. (SPEAKER) Under Japanese law, campaigning is confined to the three weeks before voters go to the polls on December 5. One widely used... and compelling... way of reaching the voters is for candidates and party workers to cruise the streets in sound trucks. They shout their pleas to the people through the public address system.

All of Japan's leading political figures often speak from trucks during the campaign.

(Man smiling) Mr. Fukuda, of the ruling party...

(Candidate speaking) Socialist Party Chairman Tomomi Narita...

(Campaign truck) Yoshikatsu Takeiri of the Komei Party.

(Microphone) Ikko Kasuga, leader of the Democratic-Socialist Party.

4. (CANDIDATE IN WHITE COAT) The campaign introduces some fresh and younger faces to the Japanese political scene. Yohei Kono, 39 years old, heads the New Liberal Club, a group of five young deputies in the Diet who broke with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party over question of fundamental party policy.

5. (POSTER) Another young candidate receives a bouquet from a supporter.

6. (PEOPLE WALKING) Like many others, this woman candidate gets up early to greet voters at a train station during the morning commuter rush.

7. (APARTMENT COMPLEX) When the polls open at 7 a.m. slightly more than 78 million Japanese 20 years of age and over are eligible to vote.

By the time polls closed 11 hours later, almost 57 million of them had voted a remarkable turn out of 73.45 percent.

To choose 511 deputies for the House of Representatives, Japan is divided into 130 election districts. Each district has anywhere from one to five candidates: a total of 899.

8. (MIKI VOTING) Prime Minister Miki and Mrs. Miki cast their ballots at a school near their home in Tokyo.

9. (OPENING BALLOTS) The task of counting the ballots falls to the staff members of local election administration committees. In most prefectures, the count starts as soon as the polls close.

10. (TV STUDIO) Most Japanese get their first news of the results by television... and the outcome soon is clear.

The voters this time deny the Liberal Democratic Party a majority for the first time since it was formed in 1955. Its seats fall from 265 to 249 -- seven short of a majority. But LDP remains the largest party. And as eleven conservative independents joined the LDP after the election, the party now holds 260 seats.

11. (LARGE CHART) As newspapers rush extras to the streets, voters learn that Japan has rejected both its hardline conservatives and the extreme left. The big gainers are the Komei and Democratic Socialist Parties and Mr. Kono's newly established New Liberal Club... all moderate reform groups.

The Komei Party gains 25 seats, raising its strength to 55. The Democratic Socialist Party's seats jump from 19 to 29. The New Liberal Club, in its first election, wins 12 new seats for a total of 17. Many senior Diet members are retired while 124 candidates win seats for the first time.

LONGER DISTANCE FOR ELECTRIC CARS

76-12

53 feet 1 min. 29 sec.

1. (ROAD) Cars which run on batteries and do not spew exhaust fumes may now extend their range on a single charge.

2. (TEST PLATFORM) In the past, one big limitation has been the short distance the car could travel without stopping for battery recharge. Models built previously in Japan and abroad had maximum ranges of no more than 200 kilometers. A new electric vehicle developed by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry undergoes laboratory tests to measure its range. The light passenger car, built during a five-year development program, may run 455 kilometers at a steady speed of 40 kilometers an hour on a single charge, a truck -- 496 kilometers without recharge. Maximum speeds on a fully-charged battery are 100 k/ph for the passenger car and 70 k/ph for a truck.

3. (TRAFFIC SIGNAL) On the road, the exhaust free electric car offers a pleasant contrast to the fumes spouting from tailpipes of gasoline-powered vehicles. The electric car is non-polluting and also quieter.